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Elemental Narcissism and the Decline of Empathy: A Biocultural Reading of the Fall in William Golding's Fiction

Khadijah AlJabri

This research began with the modest idea that bringing an evolutionary, cognitive and existential understanding to Golding's novels is going to help to establish the universality and historical specificity of his writerly engagements as well as shed new light on his moral preoccupations and concerns. In fact, the endeavour was initially launched in keeping with the spirit of Literary Darwinism, a movement which sought to foreground the field of literary study on more scientific foundations, using the emerging discipline of evolutionary psychology as a means to bridging the gap between the sciences and the humanities, and to bringing the two cultures together. Of course, most of the past critical efforts dedicated to understanding Golding's work tended to overlook or downplay the asserted relation between rationalism and biologism in the formation and articulation of Golding's moral preoccupations in order to favour a broadly religious reading. This was especially the case given the overt biblical overtones in Golding's novels as well as his confessed antagonism to the overwhelming rationalism of the sciences and the ubiquity of scientific reductionism in accounts and justifications of knowledge. Despite this antagonism, however—which included a confessed dislike for notions of Darwinian evolution and its progressive overtones—the rational dimension to Golding's novels cannot be denied. It can be detected in his early writings where attempts at establishing the universality of evil are linked to an engagement with, sometimes even an endorsement of, some of the evolutionary propositions of his own period as well as those relevant to the periods that provided the contexts for his historically or prehistorically located fictions. There are even instances when Golding appears to be sharing not only the evolutionary literary theorists' preference for examining human behaviour within a biological frame, but also their tendency to regard art as an innate propensity that constitutes an undeniable and definitive part of human nature. However, as illuminating as the field of evolutionary psychology initially proved in relation to Golding's work, the completed thesis reveals how an attempt to frame his work entirely in terms of evolutionary theorizing is unhelpfully reductionist. This is particularly the case with his later creations that seem to be written intentionally to challenge simplistic or reductionist templates of interpretation as a way of asserting the necessary complexity of literary texts if they are to be an adequate exploration or reflection of the complexity of life itself. Consequently, it became necessary to move beyond the limited scope of evolutionary theory and incorporate a range of views from diverse, yet consilient schools in contemporary psychology that can help account for the increasingly diverse spiritual, social and cultural realities characterizing his creations in general, and his later novels in particular.

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To my amazing parents, my sweet daughter, Lamar, and my wonderful siblings, Ghadeer,
Abdullah, Khalid and Sarah.

You guys are my rock.

INTRODUCTION

Golding's Postmodernism, the Crisis of the Literary Humanities and the Rise and Fall of Literary Darwinism

Ladies and gentleman, you see before you a man, I will not say more sinned against than sinning; but a man more analysed than analysing.

William Golding, 'Utopias and Antiutopias'.¹

This research began with the modest idea that bringing an evolutionary, cognitive and existential understanding to Golding's novels is going to help to establish the universality and historical specificity of his writerly engagements as well as shed new light on his moral preoccupations and concerns. In fact, the endeavour was initially launched in keeping with the spirit of Literary Darwinism, a movement which sought to foreground the field of literary study on more scientific foundations, using the emerging discipline of evolutionary psychology as a means to bridging the gap between the sciences and the humanities, and to bringing the two cultures together. Of course, most of the past critical efforts dedicated to understanding Golding's work tended to overlook or downplay the asserted relation between rationalism and biologism in the formation and articulation of Golding's moral preoccupations in order to favour a broadly religious reading. This was especially the case given the overt biblical overtones in Golding's novels, as well as his confessed antagonism to the overwhelming rationalism of the sciences and the ubiquity of scientific reductionism in accounts and justifications of knowledge. Despite this antagonism, however—which included a confessed dislike for notions of Darwinian evolution and its progressive overtones—the rational dimension to Golding's novels cannot be denied. It can be detected in his early writings where attempts at establishing the universality of evil are linked to an engagement with, sometimes even an endorsement of, some of the evolutionary propositions of his own period as well as those relevant to the periods that provided the contexts for his historically or prehistorically located fictions. There are even instances when Golding appears to be sharing not only the evolutionary literary theorists' preference for examining human behaviour within

¹ *A Moving Target*, p. 171.

a biological frame, but also their tendency to regard art as an innate propensity that constitutes an undeniable and definitive part of human nature. Both Golding and evolutionary literary theorists can also be noted as similar in the sense that they both exhibit antagonism towards postmodernist considerations of art, explicitly expressed in Golding's late 70s and early 80s productions when arguments regarding the decline of literary study and the controversy surrounding the emergence of theory became increasingly prominent. Of particular importance is Golding's 1984 novel, *The Paper Men*, which not only addresses the author's discomfort with the increasing amount of critical attention he was by then receiving, but also negatively associates much of this critical work with the poststructuralist creeds of dismissing originality and of denying the author any control or authority over his or her creations.

Golding's relationship with the literary establishment was never a simple one. He was aware that the status of canonized author, achieved so early in his career as a novelist, was very much dependent upon the avid and dedicated attention of academics and literary critics. Though finally owing much to the singularity of his artistic talent, his successes also hung on the high degree of critical interest that had helped to highlight the 'deep strata of ambiguity and complication' in his novels, and that contributed significantly, as such, to his winning the Nobel Prize for literature in 1983 (Gyllenstein; Golding, *Target* 169). Golding had even stated, on occasion, that it would be 'disingenuous' of him to pretend not to feel flattered by the intensity of the critical gaze and the rewards incumbent on this interest (*Target* 169). But his response to this degree of attention was also ambivalent; he still harboured a deep sense of aversion to and disdain for this kind of academic interest. Reviews, for one thing, continued to bother and irritate him to the point where he began avoiding them soon after publishing a book for fear that he might find his work misinterpreted, or even worse, misrepresented and put down as bad art as a result. There was also the realization that the experience of having become a source of 'educational material' for children and university students alike was not a wholly advantageous one because it seemed to turn him into nothing more than 'the raw material of an academic light industry,' or a perfect target for a feasibly promising doctoral thesis (169). Most distressing was the problem of his becoming an object for the merciless dissection and the gross misinterpretation of his brainchildren at a much larger scale than before, particularly so after the worldwide success of *Lord of the Flies*. Reductionist readings began to proliferate, ranging from Freudian, Neo-Freudian, Jungian, Marxist, and Catholic to Scientific Humanist (171, 198). There were times, too, when Golding found himself facing fallacious charges that included being labelled an 'un-American' author, a deeply religious

moralist with a Calvinistic orientation, or simply a pessimistic orchestrator of dystopian science fiction that provided little hope or assurance (*Target* 171; Golding in Biles, *Talk* 86).

As much as Golding was irritated by these concerns, however, they did not seem to have bothered him as much as what he perceived then as the death and ‘mummification’ of the author at the hands of the academic industry, communicated in many of his articles and lectures, especially those published in *A Moving Target* in 1982. He asserts in ‘Belief in Creativity’, for example, that fame is not all advantageous because the more he read the critical interpretations of his creations, the more he felt himself ceasing to exist as a living and changing human being, and perceived himself to be assuming, instead, a rather fixed and lifeless image as a paper man or a textual entity:

For a quarter of a century now the person you see before you has undergone a process of literary mummification. He is not entirely human; he is a set book. Of course that is a great personal benefit but not without its drawbacks. The creature lives and breathes like some horrible Boris Karloff figure inside his mummy wrappings which year by year are tightened. A statue, an image stands in his place.

To some extent we are all victims of a similar fate (*Target* 185).

Most of Golding’s novels, particularly those that were published at a later point in his literary career, may also be classified, in one way or another, as a response to this problem; all fixate on the mystery of art and the complex living and changing nature of the artist that is set against the reductive attempts at exposition that Golding considered to be typical of the practice of literary criticism. *The Spire* (1964), for example, deals extensively with the complicated motivations underlying the act of creativity and the impossibility of pinning on a work any one exclusive interpretation that might claim to encompass all the potential meanings that Jocelin’s final creation may hold. Golding even takes the matter further by refusing to disclose what his initial thoughts were regarding Jocelin’s motivations and, later on, famously remaining entirely reticent about *Darkness Visible* (1979), which was almost unanimously considered to be the most challenging and perplexing of Golding’s novels to date. *The Double Tongue*, published posthumously in 1995, might also be seen to exemplify Golding’s ongoing preoccupation with this resistance to reductionist hermeneutics in its summation of his views on this matter and its presentation of what may be considered as a final assertion of the irreducible mystery of both art and the artist. However, the novel that deals most explicitly with the matter of the death and mummification of the author, which seems at times to be inextricably related to the complex relationship between the artist and

the academic world, is *The Paper Men* (1984), whose publication appeared strategically to follow the naming of William Golding as the Nobel Laureate for 1983.²

Though mainly concerned with addressing certain fundamental questions relating to the spiritual and the mystical—as in most of Golding’s novels—*The Paper Men* is unique in that it delivers a clear affront to the literary establishment by painting a somewhat negative image of its practitioners as a patristic tribe bent, for the most part, on making their careers out of the exploitation of artists and of explaining away the mystery of their creation. Rick Tucker, the principal critic in the novel, for instance, is not simply a professor of English who is dedicated to a structuralist investigation of art, but he is also presented as a self-serving, manipulative and resourceful critic, willing to resort to whatever means possible in order to make a name for himself in the academic world. His target resource for achieving his ends is the novelist, Wilf Barclay, a not so sympathetic figure in whom Tucker first develops an interest as a graduate student desperate for the fresh blood of a living artist as a subject for his supposedly original dissertation. As a result, he not only deceives the author into believing that he is an assistant professor interested in writing a critical study on his work, but also takes advantage of the invitation to rummage through the author’s dustbin late at night in search of some incriminating evidence or authentic sources that might contribute to the success of his dubious endeavour. Tucker is shown years later, now a full-fledged professor, committed to the callous dissection of Barclay’s creations and reducing the complexity of his novels to tedious enumeration of the frequency of its relative clauses, which he triumphantly claims to have dedicated the time and energy to counting, meticulously, book by book (*Paper* 20). He even maintains, in a clear breach of scholarly integrity, that he has ‘a deep personal relationship’ with the author, allowing him not only Barclay’s own approval of his findings, but also the dismissal ‘from the author’s own lips’ of most of the scholarly efforts that preceded his; an evidently cheap way of granting validity to his claims (20-1). Tucker eventually becomes a literal as well as literary danger to Barclay when he decides to wrestle the novelist for control over both his books and life, by attempting to have the novelist sign an agreement granting him the right to stake his claim on Barclay’s journals, papers and manuscripts, to become his official biographer, and the sole authority in all literary matters

² *The Paper Men* was published a year after Golding was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1983, making it Golding’s first novel as a Nobel Laureate. It may also be the one novel containing his clearest statement regarding the controversy that erupted soon after he was nominated for the prize, and which raised the question of whether ‘a little English phenomenon of no special interest’, such as Golding, was deserving of such an honour (Carey, *Golding* 430-1; qtd. in Bufkin, ‘The Nobel Prize’). In fact, Golding clearly maintained in an interview that *The Paper Men* was his way of putting his ‘tongue out to the whole literary world’ and of ‘[telling] it to go piss up a rope’ (qtd. in Carey, *Golding* 470).

relating to his life and oeuvre. The result is an ill-fated pursuit across Europe, encompassing episodes of mutual suspicion, humiliation and paranoia before culminating in the artist's decision to deny the critic his biography by writing it himself, and in the critic's retaliation as he shoots Barclay dead in mid-sentence, quite literally bringing about the death of the author.

Not much is known, of course, about how much of Tucker's style of harassment was inflicted on Golding in real life. It seems, however, that Golding was inspired to create both the novel and the character of Rick L. Tucker by an American professor of English who continued to hound and irritate him for years 'as if he had a sort of God-given right to [Golding's] words and the understanding of them simply because he wrote a bad book about them about fifteen years ago' (qtd. in Carey, *Golding* 409). It is also evident, considering the commonalities between Barclay and his creator, that much of Barclay's character and career seems based on Golding's own. Barclay, after all, is depicted as sharing his creator's physique, age, his fear of heights as well as a more than occasional love for a drink (Carey, *Golding* 423). He is also shown as a renowned artist whose career was defined by his first creation, *Coldharbour* which, like *Lord of the Flies*, is noted as a far more popular book than any of his later novels. Moreover, both Barclay and his creator are revealed as private individuals who detest the idea of having their biographies written. They are also particularly opposed to being regarded as no more than potential dissertation sources for those graduate students who believe a living and breathing target to be a far more interesting research subject than a dead one (*Target* 170).³

Despite these similarities, however, with their suggestion that Barclay's antagonism to critics and the literary industry is Golding's own, there are definite moments when Golding appears to be distancing himself from his supposed alter ego as a means of including a certain conception of the artist as well as the critic in the attack. Barclay, for one thing, is not exactly depicted as a helpless victim in his affair with Tucker, but is rather highlighted as similarly villainous, capable of tormenting and humiliating his pursuer to breaking point. He is different from Golding, his creator, in that he is a morally and spiritually lacking individual whose opposition to the writing of his biography is not merely the desire for privacy, but also a fear of having his sinful past exposed and his image forever fixed as a plagiarizer, harasser, and maybe even a murderer. He is also different from Golding in that he is incapable of regaining inspiration or of maintaining his engagement with serious art, and so he finds

³ It was Golding's concern, in fact, that there might one day be 'some pussy-footing graduate student from Ashcan' who would gain access to his journals, write his biography, and 'either silently (unobtrusively) correct [his] spelling, or even worse, interrupt the text with brackets and sic in italics' (qtd. in Carey 409, xii).

himself at one point drawn into dubious kinds of derivative writing or what Barclay would prefer to describe as an '[exercise] in how to cheat the public,' in order to maintain his successful profile (*Paper* 23-4). This takes the attack on the academic establishment back full-circle for idealizing an artist so morally bankrupt in his actual life, or for even showing any interest at all in the kind of art he produces. However, the fact that Barclay's negative depiction was taken to a point where he seems deserving of his own annihilation suggests that there might be more to the novel and its engagement with art, after all, than merely Golding relieving his personal frustrations and simply delivering an attack on literary academics.

The Paper Men is first and foremost a product of its age. As such, it is not only an attempt at highlighting the declining authority of the artist over his brainchildren, but also a means of critiquing the conditions of moral and spiritual decline that are identified for Golding with the forces of postmodernity which he regarded as now pervading every aspect of post-war English life, including the arts.⁴ Consequently, it might seem logical to classify *The Paper Men* as primarily belonging to Golding's later and more social novels where the focus on the spiritually barren age and its lack of a moral foundation is tackled in order to reflect on the question of free will, and the almost inescapable inevitability of certain individuals such as Barclay and Tucker succumbing to the lure of moral relativity and embracing rather than interrogating a condition of spiritual deafness. It is also possible to consider *The Paper Men* as Golding's way of highlighting what he considered then to be a critical regression in the arts by mirroring the entropic quality of the age in its artistic production. There are even instances when Golding appears to be linking the decline of serious art with the emerging spirit of postmodernity and the culture industry which strove not only to prioritize the commodification of art, but also dissolve the boundaries between high and low culture (Crawford 166-7; Golding, *Gates* 123).⁵ This is accomplished by depicting Barclay's later career as lacking the originality and creativity that is associated with his earlier literary output as his work has become more oriented, instead, to superficial sketches or the regurgitation of art forms associated with mass culture (*Paper* 23-4). It can also be detected in Golding's subtle reference to a mass-produced media industry or the massification of popular culture,

⁴ Paul Crawford, in fact, presents the most extensive exploration of how both *The Paper Men* and *Darkness Visible* were Golding's way of critiquing postmodern England in his book *Politics and History in William Golding: The World Turned Upside Down* (2002).

⁵ In fact the notion of postmodern art being a regression or a decline from the seriousness, depth and relevance of modernism can be said to have been shared by some of the prominent critics who were interested in Golding such as Terry Eagleton, Gabriel Josipovici and Frank Kermode. See Eagleton's 'Capitalism, Modernism and Postmodernism' in *Against the Grain* (1986), Josipovici's *What Ever Happened to Modernism?* (2010) and Kermode's 'Objects, Jokes and Art' in *Continuities* (1968).

particularly in those moments when Barclay is seen as relying on imagery associated with film and television in writing his biography (Golding, *Paper* 13, 128; McCarron, *Golding* 47; Crawford 184), or in the instance when Johnny informs Barclay that his becoming a TV host has granted him more success, profit and recognition than actually being a writer (Golding, *Paper* 135-6; McCarron, *Golding* 47). Similarly, reliance on 'scatological references' and trash imagery in describing both the art and the artist are noted by Crawford to deliver something of the same effect, not only in terms of Barclay's moral descent as an individual, but also in terms of his loss of motivation as an artist in a post-war world that is continually numbed by the increasing growth of its culture industry (184).⁶

This further highlights the novel as less of a 'misdirected revenge' or a 'personal vendetta' against the literary establishment, as critics such as Bernard Dick have maintained (133-4), and as more of a statement on a 'postmodern English literature industry dominated by depthless writing and criticism that, like Barclay's journal, might as well be set down "on lavatory paper"' (Crawford 184; *Paper* 131). Golding's attack on critics, in other words, might have been a means of not only foregrounding what he believed to be a serious affliction in the arts, but also tackling the academic industry as one of the principal factors contributing to the problem rather than offering any mitigation. This is particularly pronounced in one of the key scenes in the novel where Barclay is shown as attending a literary conference in Seville where he is supposed to present a lecture only to discover that the critics have obviously found a suitable target for their critical scrutiny in his fictional creations. They have, for one thing, declared his work unoriginal because they have been operating under the postmodernist assumption that 'there is nothing new,' and that one of the most important questions to ask when engaged in the study of a text is 'what other books does it come from?' (21-22). They also appear to have developed a knack for the merciless dissection of his creations, considering their commitment to the process of understanding 'wholeness by tearing it into separate pieces' or by regarding it through the narrow, but supposedly illuminating lens of theory (21-22). Burdened by the critics' evident lack of integrity, their apparent dedication to the superficial in art, and their commitment to explaining away the mystery of his creativity by insisting on tracing his creations to other

⁶ The critique of mass produced media seems to have been shared by the Frankfurt school whose subscribers did not think much of popular culture and its products due, for the most part, to the association they perceive between such products and the rise of capitalism. In fact, they seem to think of mass produced media as some sort of propaganda aimed at catering to capitalist interests. F. R. Leavis had also been an early opponent of the standardization of media and the blurring of boundaries between high and low culture in his 1930 renowned manifesto 'Mass Civilization and Minority Culture'.

texts, Barclay finally finds himself forced to accept the sad reality that he has no use for inventiveness, nor does he have much of a need ‘to dive, suffer, [and] endure that obscurely necessary anguish’ that comes with the act of genuine creativity (21-22). As a result, he not only ends up writing his subsequent novel ‘in next to no time, and with no more than five percent of himself’ (22-3), but also dedicates himself to a career of potboilers that do not demand a great deal of effort, nor do they contain much originality, truth or literary value.

Most of Barclay’s observations regarding Tucker and the academics in the conference register a sense of the degradation of literary study either through the relativizing effects of the postmodern or the collapse of scholarship into a pointless analytic reductionism that fixates on the frequency of relative clauses in Barclay’s works, the change in his accent (121-2), or the ridiculously non sequitur such as how and why Barclay and his wife laugh a lot (39). They also perfectly sum up Golding’s own beliefs and views regarding art and the mystery of the act of creativity, noted frequently in his novels and lectures as well as some of his articles and interviews, as a response to critics’ constant efforts to understand his creations in terms of other texts and to deny him his own sense of originality by insisting on tracing his works to what they believe to be influences or intertexts that bred them.⁷ When asked about whether such a process bothered him, Golding maintained:

[t]here may be a degree of truth in source-hunting, since in literary terms I’m highly educated; but equally I’ve spent my life as a human being living among other human beings. One of the defects of the scholastic literary critic who doesn’t know his arse from his elbow is that he invariably deduces the making of one book from the making of another, without ever considering who, in that case, made The Original Book. In other words, that sort of critic – either through ignorance or jealousy – tries to explain away the act of creativity. I think it’s possible that my books sometimes have a kick-off in other books, but only because my *human* experience has made me feel that, in those circumstances, I know better. *Lord of the Flies* had a sort of genesis in seeing how ridiculous a picture of human nature *Coral Island* is. But I have to say that as a child I took refuge in books like *Coral Island* (in Haffenden 101).

This brings in the rise of theory as one of the principal factors infecting the critical pursuits of the age, and contributing, as such, to the regression of the arts, at least for Golding, who

⁷ The article ‘Rough Magic’ in *The Hot Gates*, in particular, is dedicated to establishing the mystery inherent in the act of creativity. As for novels, there is, as already stated, *The Spire*, *The Double Tongue*, and of course, *The Paper Men*.

considered its rise as responsible for the collapse of criticism into an ‘intertextuality’ that is mere source hunting, and the dissolution of boundaries between high and low culture. Tucker, as a representative of the critical industry of the age, for instance, is repeatedly shown as dismissing the inferiority of popular culture as ‘a common misconception’ (47), and insisting on holding an author such as Barclay in high esteem, even going so far as to regard him as ‘part of the Great Pageant of English Literature’ (38). Golding’s critique of theory can also be detected in Tucker’s continuous attempts to rob Barclay of his control over his life and creations, or rather in his success at shooting the author dead mid-sentence, especially given how the event resonates in what it symbolizes with Barthes’ proclamations regarding the real role of the artist in the study of literature and his declaration of the death of the author. Furthermore, there is the parallelism between Golding’s choice of the title, *The Paper Men*, and Barthes’s use of the phrase ‘paper-author’ in his seminal work ‘The Death of the Author’, which makes Golding’s critique of the poststructuralist creed of dismissing the artist as irrelevant to the interpretation process seem a little less coincidental and somewhat more intentional (McCarron, *Coincidence* 148). According to Barthes:

[i]t is not that the author may not ‘come back’ in the text, in his text, but he does so as a ‘guest’. If he is a novelist, he is inscribed in the novel like one of his characters, figured in the carpet; no longer privileged, paternal, aletheological, his inscription is ludic. He becomes, as it were, a ‘paper-author’ (161).

Adopting such a perspective, for Barthes and the poststructuralists alike, was supposed to break the limitation imposed on the text by the traditional view of authorial control, and revolutionize the field of literary study by allowing for the exploration of a multitude of potential readings made possible by relocating the ‘text’s unity’ in its ‘destination’ or recipients rather than its origin (148). The same thing can also be said about most of the proclamations associated with interdisciplinarity and the adoption of continental philosophy in relation to the study of literature, considering how they, too, were meant to revitalize the art of criticism and take it beyond its state of imprisonment within the safe confines of the traditional paradigm. However, although these theoretical reformulations were initially expected to aid the growth of the art of criticism by their proponents, their supposedly promising outcomes were not consistently materialized. Propelled by cultural, economic and political forces, the practice fell into the infamous ‘Theory Wars’ where subscribers to different traditions fought fiercely to ensure the prominence of their beliefs and the supremacy of their factions by setting the annihilation of their opponents as their ultimate

goal. A good example of this process was the McCabe affair of 1981 that took the wars fought on the academic front out to the popular media world and triggered a wave of concern over the status of the academic literary field, not only in terms of its being made to appear as if it were being attacked from within by alien thinking, but also in terms of the propagated image of its scholars as intolerant of the revolutionary propositions of younger academics (Barry 268-70). This triggered a public debate regarding how the study of literature is to be defended and developed in educational institutions across the country, with some still insisting on rejecting the jargon-laden pursuits associated with theory in favour of a more traditional approach to the task, while others urged the birth of a new interdisciplinarity and revolutionary approach to knowledge and value (269). For a writer such as Golding who was generally not comfortable with criticism, evident in his vicious critique of academe in *The Paper Men*, the more recent critical proclamations associated with poststructuralist thought were unlikely to be favourably perceived. After all, their dismissal of authority in general entailed compromising traditional and classical considerations of art that had established the principles by which literature might ideally be studied and evaluated. According to Crawford, the development of 'newer' and more 'radical approaches' in the field of literary criticism, for Golding, most likely resulted in his perceiving the practice as having:

reversed the values that he thinks should count in all literary endeavours, that is, elitist conceptions of the 'great tradition' or canon of English literature and the commonsense 'value' of literature that reveals universal or eternal aspects of human living. This view of literature was, of course, subject to radical attacks from the 1960s onward, particularly with the development of cultural and communication studies that began to examine popular fiction, television, film, and so on. In *The Paper Men*, an antipathy to those critics who attack fictional authority fits in with Golding's critique of *social* values in *Darkness Visible* (174-5).

This sense of concern regarding the status of the field in the wake of theory would again emerge in Golding's 1995 novel, *The Double Tongue*.⁸ It can be detected, too, in a number of publications that foregrounded and worried over the problem in a later context where the humanities in general had come to seem under threat or at least on the back foot, accused in a scientific and consumer-oriented society of being increasingly irrelevant to knowledge or

⁸ In *The Double Tongue*, Golding mirrors the continuous drop in high culture and the regression of serious art of the early 90s in the declining status of Delphi that happened to coincide with the increasing political and cultural dominance of the Romans in the first century BC (Stape).

profit.⁹ The concern would also result in the emergence of the evolutionary paradigm, known as Literary Darwinism, which began with Joseph Carroll's attempt at presenting a systematic approach to the study of literature (in 1995) in an effort to ground the field of literary study on more solid foundations, to bring it out of its state of autonomy, to establish a dialogue with the sciences, and to finally put an end to the reign of postmodernism.

Crisis in the Humanities in the 1990s and Beyond

It is unquestionably the case that after the era of 'high theory' of the 1980s, the humanities seem perpetually to have felt under pressure to justify themselves. This has been particularly the issue in the U.S. where the number of enrolments in humanities programs has significantly dropped, presumably in light of declining career opportunities, especially compared to training in business, the sciences and the social sciences (Gottschall, *Science* 1). There also appears to have been a steady decline in governmental interest in the field, judging by the significant cutbacks in humanities programs, especially in the U.S. but increasingly in Europe and the U.K., contributing to the serious concern over the fate of literary study in an age of profit. For some commentators, however, such as Steven Pinker, Blaine Greteman, and Sander Gilman, this notion of a crisis might simply be hyperbole. The decline in culture, for one thing, seems a perennial modern concern given how it can be traced to as far back as the 1600s when Robert Burton voiced his lament for the loss of inspiration and the drop of the traditional artistic taste in his 'bastard age' (qtd. in Greteman). In fact, Pinker notes that the concern might simply be another case of how each era mourns the artistic productions of its past and fails to appreciate the nature of the innovative art forms that are emergent (Pinker, *Blank Slate* 403; Gilman). Moreover, other commentators have pointed out how statistics reveal that the reported drop in enrolments happened in the period between the 70s and 80s, and that numbers began to creep back up afterwards, neglected and unnoticed (Bérubé). Gilman and Pinker also insist that although the economic recession had certainly played a role in agitating the cultural wars and reinforcing the divide in the field, the economy was now considerably better than during former periods when the humanities had evidently flourished (Gilman; Pinker, *Blank Slate* 401). This should reinforce the argument that whatever perception of crisis there was, might have simply been an exaggeration after all. Coming to accept such a conclusion, however, does not mean denying the fact that there are certain

⁹ Examples of such publications include Alvin Kernan's *The Death of Literature* (1990), Carl Woodring's *Literature: an Embattled Profession* (1999), John Ellis's *Literature Lost: Social Agendas and the Corruption of The Humanities* (1997), and the 2004 winter issue of *Critical Inquiry* which was specifically dedicated to tackling the problem.

disciplines within the humanities that are in desperate need of reformation, especially when it comes to the esteemed focus of literary criticism and analysis.

For the Literary Darwinists, there are good reasons to believe why there might be some truth to the traditionalists' claims concerning the loss of the field's status as a consequence of the poststructuralist turn. Fundamental to the challenge mounted by theory was that the precepts upon which the field of literary study is built had proven themselves to be self-contradictory, not only prioritizing the notion of a reality governed and constructed solely through language and culture, but also placing too much emphasis on the denial of all claims to truth, and then demanding the acceptance of this disavowal as itself a truth (Scatamburlo; Carroll, *Darwinism* 16). A further argument put forward by Literary Darwinists is that the radicalisation of literary study under theory had produced an abstract discourse that avoided 'any serious engagement with real-world historical events' (Scatamburlo). This resulted in the transformation of the field of criticism from a practice 'valued for its explanatory powers,' or its capacity to inspire 'social change,' to an art that 'can be used to "playfully" decenter, deconstruct, or otherwise disrupt established meanings and presuppositions' (Scatamburlo). In addition, the postmodernist denial of truth and its distrust of the idea of correspondence between language and the world, and even the existence of an objective real, seemed, at least by implication, to question the reliability of scientific inquiry and its claim to epistemological certainty. The field known as 'Science Studies', where cultural critique is carried out in relation to scientific knowledge, was one direction that seemed to take cultural critique over from literature to science itself, and thereby widen the epistemological gulf between the arts and humanities, and the sciences. Moreover, for its opponents, the habit of distrust and the burgeoning appeal of social constructivism seemed to have endowed critics with 'a defensive force field that renders [their findings] impervious to empirical criticism' (Carroll, *Darwinism* 29). This, according to Latour, led critics to fall under the spell of this power and to believe that they alone possess the capacity to expose ideological constructions masquerading as truth, and that they alone are able to uncover the questionable nature of what is commonly passed off as indisputable fact. Also noted by postmodernism's opponents is the undeniable temptation to sacrifice integrity and to give in to subjectivity, to label all that is not approved of as a ploy, to favour the certainty of science when it serves a certain purpose, and to admit to reality if it involves the existence of what is valued (Latour). The end result is a practice in danger of not only dismissing the study of literature in favour of 'literariness,' or discourse supremacy (Barry 274), but also subjecting itself to the scorn and ridicule of the sciences as in

the case of the Sokal affair.¹⁰

Having come to an agreement of sorts on the root cause of the malaise, both the traditionalists and the literary Darwinists hold it necessary to abandon theory if the field of literary study is to be saved from its state of irrelevance and its continual decline; but whereas traditionalists propose the restoration of the classical paradigms as another important step to recovering the centrality of literary study,¹¹ the Darwinists believe that there is still hope for a new interdisciplinarity, provided that it is grounded on new and more considered foundations. This is crucial, they maintain, because the problem of an autonomy that leads to trivialization, irrelevance and marginalization stems, for the most part, in their view, from the fact that most of the theories that are still operable in the field of literary criticism had long been discarded and deemed as fallacious by their parent disciplines. An example of that, of course, would be the psychoanalytical approach and its outdated Freudian principles, or better yet, poststructuralism and its flawed Saussurean linguistics (Carroll, *Darwinism* ix; Nordlund). Literary Darwinists also maintain that the problem of autonomy can further be blamed on the standards that govern the uses of theory, considering how this commonly involves selecting and employing an approach based on the promise of producing interesting readings in one

¹⁰ According to Carroll, the distrust of scientific inquiry and the fixation on outdated theories, made possible by the field's state of autonomy, have subjected the practice of criticism to ridicule. An example of such an attempt would be the Sokal affair. Alan Sokal set out to demonstrate that the editors of *Social Text* would publish an article 'salted with nonsense if (a) it sounded good and (b) it flattered the editors' ideological preconceptions.' He claims that the editors were unable to tell that his article was meant as a parody of the postmodernist denial of the existence of an objective reality and the belief in the unreliability of the scientific method. The article 'Transgressing the Boundaries: Toward a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity' was actually published in the Spring/Summer 1996 issue of *Social Text*. See 'A Physicist Experiments with Cultural Studies' in *Lingua Franca* May/June 1996.

¹¹ Scholars who are more dedicated to traditional norms when it comes to the study of literature adhere to different principles in their scholastic pursuits, and as such, they cannot be simplistically associated with one school or approach. However, they seem united to a certain extent in their belief that the western canon contains most of the values, standards and norms that can be brought to the study of literature, and in their opposition to some of the key principles that have come to define theory-driven or poststructuralist approaches (Carroll, *Darwinism* 31). There are the new critics or subscribers to the school of close reading, for example, who believe in the autonomy of texts and that the interpretation process does not require consulting any sources outside the text (31). Their opposition to poststructuralism can be said to be stemming from their 'dislike' of how it '[dissolves] texts into the amorphous mass of textuality,' or of how it extends textuality, in its new historicist form, to the 'social context' (31). There are also subscribers to the historical-biographical approach who might oppose the manner by which poststructuralists undermine the authority and control of the author or the capacity of texts to genuinely represent their times (31). Pragmatic criticism also retains some traditional elements in that it rejects the poststructuralist theory in favour of the kind of theory derived from canonical works, and which is normally regarded as a 'much more complete and adequate "criticism of life"' than any other deconstructivist approach (32). After all, the canon is believed to contain 'the best that is known and thought in the world' (Arnold 19; Carroll, *Darwinism* 33). Philosophical, religious or psychological systems might be brought to the text, but since they are regarded as incapable of accounting for the full complexity of texts and the human experience, pluralism is encouraged (Carroll, *Darwinism* 32-3). Judging by Golding's views on art, he might be classified as a champion of not only traditional notions of literary study, but also pluralism as I will later on show.

area, but elsewhere granting validity to an entirely different and contradictory methodology, or skewing the theory if it resists application to a particular text (Nordlund). Given this condition of fragmentation, it became necessary for theoretically inclined critics to call increasingly for a metatheoretical framework in order to save literary criticism from its turf wars and to recover a condition of stability and consistency, both within itself and in its relation with other branches of knowledge (Nordlund).

But a key difficulty for the foundation of a new interdisciplinarity is the overcoming of problematic earlier conceptualizations of human nature, especially those exhibited in what came to be known as what Stephen Pinker referred to, alluding to David Hume, as the blank slate or the standard social science model (SSSM). This conception, though carrying a long history within empiricist philosophy, took a cultural turn from the 1930s and 40s with the development of sociology, cultural anthropology and behaviourism. It continued to prevail in the humanities and social sciences given its powerful and persuasive political and social appeal, especially in the aftermath of the Second World War and the fall of Social Darwinism (See Pinker, *Blank Slate* 139). The most important culturalist models are founded on some belief that evolution created human nature which, in turn, created culture so that it had become possible for human beings to change from biological beings to cultural ones, and for cultural energies to become the sole autonomous driving force in the moulding process that shapes humanity. Given how this appealing dogma of the 'blank slate' seems to release humans from scientific determinism, it found a welcoming home in the social sciences before it became absorbed widely into the humanities and the study of literature. And though cognitive neuroscience and psychoanalysis, with their reliance on biological facts, posed their own set of challenges to the doctrine of the blank slate, it was not as easily threatened as when E.O Wilson published *Sociobiology* in 1975 with the hope of reviving arguments for the continuing relevance of human origins and our ancestry in the animal world. Wilson's book caused a furore in its aim to challenge the blank slate view, not only in demonstrating how most of our behaviour is still governed by biology as much as culture, but also in committing what was considered then to be the unforgivable taboo of analysing human behaviour in terms of evolutionary processes. Needless to say, Wilson was accused of harbouring a political agenda—a charge which he and his proponents denied—and of being committed to a reductionist biological determinism that denied the complexity of human behaviour and held the danger of legitimizing slavery, paving the way for another genocide, locking people into cast systems, and risking all the positive prospects that the doctrine of the blank slate could ever offer humanity (Pinker, *Blank Slate* 106-8). Despite all the negative criticism, however,

Wilson did manage to acquire supporters for his effort to achieve the integration of evolutionary biology with the social sciences, and for utilizing the synthesis in bridging the gulf between the natural sciences and the humanities. This support gradually took shape as adaptationist literary theory, Evocriticism, or what is more commonly known as Literary Darwinism.

The integration of an evolutionary understanding of human nature with the humanities in general and the study of literature in particular is not, of course, a recent achievement. The effort began in Victorian criticism following the publication of Darwin's theory of evolution, and first made a full appearance in Hippolyte Taine's contribution to literary criticism before it later appeared in the works of Emile Zola, Leslie Stephen and Carl Jung (Carroll, *Darwinism* xiv; Ryan). However, in 1995, Joseph Carroll presented a more systematic and cohesive approach to the study of literature in an attempt to produce the kind of findings that are 'not only new but true' (*Reading* 29), but that are also in accordance with the aim of realizing Wilson's vision of consilience, of having 'an integrated body of knowledge extending in an unbroken chain of material causation from the lowest level of subatomic particles to the highest levels of cultural imagination' (5). The basic principle that can be said to underlie the adaptationist program is that most critical pursuits involve, in one way or another, a view of human nature, even the postmodernist view that there is no human nature. And since a faulty theory of human nature would only render further faulty findings, it is considered necessary first to formulate an understanding of the human mind that is in accordance with what is currently known and established in the evolutionary study of human behaviour (*Reading* 32; *Darwinism* 24). This resulted in the initial consideration of the Integrated Model, which was proposed by psychologist Leda Cosmides and anthropologist John Tooby in the early 90s as a way of countering the prevalence of the blank slate by emphasizing the human mind's massive modularity and highlighting the innate complexity of its structure. The model's core premise is that the processes of evolution by natural selection has resulted in the emergence of the kind of structure that is more akin in its design to that of a Swiss-army knife in that it is composed of different specialized modules, each targeting a set of problems that our ancestors had to deal with as early as the Pleistocene period (165-6).

Carroll's reliance on the model, however, had to come to an end due to a set of problematic notions associated with the very heart of the theory. One problem, for example, is the claim that mental evolution stabilized and ceased in the Pleistocene period, leaving the descendants for the next 1.6 million years with a hunter-gatherer mentality that engendered a mismatch between the human brain and the current environments, and resulted in a certain set

of behaviours becoming maladaptive (Carroll, 'Revolution').¹² There is also the problem of how the theory had failed to take into account the earlier evolutionary environments that lay further beyond the Pleistocene, or even to consider the Pleistocene's fluctuating environmental elements that would have surely made the hypothesized stabilization of mental functions impossible ('Revolution'). In addition, there is the theory's inability to address the emergence of art and technology some 60,000 to 30,000 years ago, especially given its advocacy of the persistence of a Stone Age mentality in a modern world. It makes it difficult to provide a convincing argument as to why a brain that had supposedly ceased evolving during the Pleistocene period would suddenly be capable of creating the revolution of art or culture (Carroll, 'Revolution'; Mithen 20). Finally and most importantly, it would be difficult for the theory to explain adequately how a massively modular brain allows for the demanding engagement with art, culture and technology in the absence of general intelligence, given that such cognitive manoeuvres require a certain degree of mental flexibility that cannot be afforded easily by the automaticity of cognitive modules, even if they were to tackle these tasks 'in aggregate' rather than individually (Carroll, 'Revolution'; Tooby and Cosmides, 'Foundations' 113).

In an effort to solve the riddle of art, religion and culture, archaeologist Steven Mithen proposed a model of the human brain which, though it may initially seem to support the extreme modularity view of the evolutionary psychologists, is still uniquely different in that it emphasizes the emergence of a general intelligence as one of the essential phases in the evolution of the human mind. By utilizing research on primate behaviour, archaeology and anthropology, Mithen maintains that it is possible to imagine the structure of our common ancestor's mind as not particularly oriented to dealing with specific tasks because it was yet to be presented with the selective pressures that allowed for the evolution of the much more efficient domain-specific modules commonly noted as geared towards more specific forms of behaviour. This phase, he explains, is possibly the first phase in the evolution of the human mind. Since we are characterized by a highly social nature which we share with our primate cousins, it is highly possible that a module for social intelligence was the first domain-specific module to evolve before other forms of intelligence such as natural history intelligence, tool-use intelligence, and language intelligence came to follow. Mithen states that our homo-sapiens ancestors might have initially been imprisoned in this second phase of mental

¹² One such behaviour is the craving for diets that are rich in sugar and fat that is believed to have served our ancestors well in the demanding environment of the Pleistocene; however, now that such diets have become abundant, our evolved preference for fat and sugar has led to increasing obesity rates (Carroll, 'Revolution').

evolution when they first emerged 100,000 years ago and were not in possession of the mental flexibility needed to address tasks that require the integration of different modules. In order to illustrate this, he pictures the brain as a church with multiple compartments and chambers separated by thick walls that are supposed to symbolize how the ancestors caught in the second phase found it hard to use one kind of intelligence to aid in fulfilling the purposes for which another intelligence evolved. For the third phase of evolution, however, such walls or cognitive barriers would eventually break or collapse, allowing for the compartments to communicate finally with one another, and ultimately to give rise to the important process of ‘cognitive fluidity’ which Mithen believes to be responsible for facilitating the creation of the demanding constructs of culture, art and technology.¹³

Mithen’s cognitive fluidity eventually came to replace massive modularity in Carroll’s *Literary Darwinism* in 2004 as a model that takes into account the structure and stages of mental development that made the evolution of art possible. Despite the progress that was garnered by the adoption of the new model, however, adaptationists still found themselves incapable of concluding the debate on one of the most controversial areas in the field relating to the question of why the arts evolved. A simple answer would be because engagement with the arts, or more specifically, fictional creations, is pleasurable. But why would the consumption of nonfactual information be regarded as such for beings who should supposedly be more attuned to factual data if they wanted to survive? Most of the evolutionary theories proposed were found to argue either for an adaptationist stance or an anti-adaptationist one. Those who consider fiction in its most literary sense as an adaptation were inclined to think of it as such because they believe that any costly behaviour that diverts resources away from other vital behaviours is an adaptation, or it would not have continued to be naturally selected over the course of the many years that marked our struggle for survival (Austin 12; B. Boyd, *Origin* 73). They also believe that the presence of certain consistent art forms such as music, dance or poetry along with fiction across both primitive and advanced societies around the globe is likely to be indicative not only of a set of biological roots that were possibly fostered

¹³ This shift in perspective, however, demonstrates one of the field’s controversial aspects, exemplified in the difficulty of keeping up with the sciences. The theory was found to require constant updating in accordance with recent findings in the collective discipline of evolutionary psychology as well as those of the social and natural sciences. Although this does not constitute a negativity in itself, it had caused some misconceptions about the theory’s potential in accounting for the complexity of the humanities, and as such, it had resulted in a reluctance to adopt it. An example of this can be seen in Jonathan Kramnick’s ‘Against Literary Darwinism’ in which he associates the Literary Darwinists’ arguments for art as an adaptation with massive modularity, the theory they have abandoned in favour of cognitive fluidity. It should be noted, however, that there are actually prominent figures in the field who until recently were seen to be associating their evolutionary arguments regarding art with massive modularity as Kramnick explained in his reply.

by natural selection for the purpose of aiding the development of the arts, but also of a hidden function that justifies its evolution and persistence (B. Boyd, *Origin* 73). They even cite the fact that it is a pleasurable activity that ‘develops reliably in all humans without training,’ and that it arouses a marked emotional response in its recipients to be suggestive of a crucial significance or a survival value because pleasure and emotional arousal are nature’s way of encouraging the organism’s engagement with behaviours that should supposedly promote its genetic fitness (B. Boyd, *Origin* 73; Dissanayake, ‘Ideology’). Despite this apparent agreement among supporters of the fiction as an adaptation claim, however, there is no clear consensus on why exactly our capacity for arts, or more specifically fictional creations, evolved. Ellen Dissanayake, for example, proposes that one of the chief functions of art is that of ‘making special,’ of exaggerating or setting off important elements out of their usual context in a manner similar to play and ritual, as a way of highlighting the body of objects or behaviours that are important for survival such as hand axes or social cohesion (*Art* 126-7). Then there are psychologists Tooby and Cosmides who maintain that art, or more specifically fiction, serves an important survivalist function in that it promotes mental organization, and allows human beings to contemplate navigating possible life-threatening scenarios in advance, without having to resort to the costly measure of putting themselves through any actual risk or danger (‘Beauty’). Similarly, Joseph Carroll maintains, in clear support of E.O. Wilson, that because the evolution of intelligence has marked our estrangement from the instinctual world, and because ‘[there] was not enough time for human heredity to cope with the vastness of new contingent possibilities revealed by high intelligence,’ the arts evolved as a means of carrying the important function of ‘[filling] the gap’ (Carroll, *Darwinism* 81; Wilson 246). For Brian Boyd, however, the development of the arts should not be restricted to serving one single function because it is possible to see them as playing an important role in improving the brain’s plasticity and neural wiring, as well as promoting and honing a variety of skills and activities that are essential for group-living such as the capacity to track intentions, beliefs and connections, detect cheaters, and avoid the costly outcome of falling victim to defectors (‘Theories’ 151-3).

All of these theories, of course, contend that art is a biologically rooted behaviour with an enormous survival value. However, for Geoffrey Miller, an evolutionary psychologist who traces the development of large brains to factors of sexual selection and mate preference, it is possible to regard the arts as not so different from a peacock’s tail or a bower bird’s nest in that they are products of sexual selection that mainly fulfils the function of advertising sexual fitness. As for Steve Pinker, Richard Lewontin and Stephen Jay Gould, it might be an

overstatement to consider the arts as anything more than a highly elaborate outcome of other adaptations, based on the condition of complexity or the pleasure factor alone. In fact, they maintain that it is not impossible for a by-product to assume a highly sophisticated manifestation without having evolved to serve a certain function specifically, or for a complex behaviour to arouse pleasure without its being nothing more than a drug or a 'mental cheesecake' (Pinker, *Blank Slate* 405; Gould and Lewontin).¹⁴ For Michael Austin, though, our capacity to consume and produce art, or rather fiction, should not be solely regarded in terms of a mere adaptation or an elaborate by-product, but should rather be considered along the lines of a useful tool that makes use of the complex design and structure of the human mind for the purpose of helping us cope with our world (14-5). This theory, in particular, while not specifically favoured as providing a more accurate account of the function of fiction than any of the other propositions, will be revisited later given its association with the functions of memory, anxiety and cognitive bias. It will prove vital to both analysing the novels in question and debunking the claim that an evolutionary theory of criticism can never be reconciled with the postmodern or poststructuralist approaches to art.

For an artist such as Golding who was deeply interested in the matter of art as a behaviour, and who had written extensively on the issue in an attempt to highlight its status as both a common and a mystical act, no clear answer seems to have presented itself as to why people are driven to the consumption and production of fictional creations aside from the simple fact that there is a deep sense of pleasure and delight to be gotten from such acts (*Target* 158-9). However, although Golding had always been the kind of artist who insisted on the mystery of the act of creativity, and who opposed any scientific or reductive explanations of the human condition, particularly those that were aligned with Darwin, Freud or Marx (186-7), there are moments when he appears to be clearly favouring a naturalistic view rather than a cultural one (131). In his 1976 lecture, Golding maintains:

¹⁴ Pinker believes that people who are involved in the arts usually argue in favour of the arts-as-an-adaptation view perhaps to emphasize their importance, grant them validity, or 'protect them from budget-conscious politicians seeking to cut them from school curricula' ('Consilient Study of Literature'). He warns, though, that adaptive, in strictly evolutionary terms, does not have to necessarily mean good because there are a lot of behaviours that although have proven themselves to be contributing to our species' reproductive success, are still deemed as deleterious such as killing or stealing as I will later on show. For Brian Boyd, however, Pinker's by-product argument, or rather his famous 'cheesecake for the mind' view, is rather lacking because it only addresses the consumption of art. It does not explain why humans are willing to make the effort to create art that does not necessarily instruct, and it does not adequately answer the question as to why it is universal. Boyd also found Pinker's art analogy with our appetite for diets that are rich in fat and sugar to be suggestive of a prophesized maladaptivity, given how this propensity is normally tackled as an example of the mismatch between our Pleistocene brains and our current environment ('Theories' 13-4).

[we] like to hear of succession of events; and, as an inspection of the press will demonstrate, have only a marginal interest in whether the succession is minutely true or not. ... More simply and directly still in the examination of our nature; when children holler and yell because of some infant tragedy or tedium, at once, when we take them on our knee and begin—shouting if necessary—‘Once upon a time’, they fall silent and attentive. Standing as we do in some way tiptoe at the apex of the animal kingdom, story is in our nature. There will always be stories written and published (158-9).

Golding also appears to be of the opinion that whatever the mental faculties that are involved in the art behaviour, they were most probably ‘thrust on us’ by nature ‘for the exercise of the craft itself’ (195). One such faculty is what is commonly known as the ‘willing suspension of disbelief’ that generally involves the ability ‘to accept the scraps, the hastily gathered observations [and] the leaps and gambols of language’ for the purpose of sinking into an alternative world or ‘[sharing] some level of reality’ (195). He even proposes the phrase ‘the reader’s instinctive complicity’ as an alternative to the term ‘willing suspension of disbelief’ because he wants to downplay the implications of the ‘conscious decision and effort’ associated with the first term and emphasize, instead, our natural and unconscious readiness ‘to receive writing’ (194). All of these observations help in lending credence to the argument that art for Golding might have been a biological phenomenon and ‘a distinguishing mark of [the human] mind’ (131). And although little was said regarding the motivations or instincts driving the creative act, rather than the reception of it, the fact that Golding associated the persistence of art with the continuity of human conflict, selfishness and aggression seem to suggest that it is human nature, for Golding, that is both the source and subject of art and literature (184).

Such a view is actually one of the most crucial foundations upon which the adaptationist programme is built, a fact that can be seen in its proponents’ tendency to regard art as a biologically-rooted behaviour that might have evolved to fulfil certain important functions. It can also be detected in their insistence on restoring the artists’ authority over their creations by classifying them as among the ‘best psychologists’ of our history (Carroll, *Darwinism* 109). Literature, states Carroll, can be one of the most readily available sources of information on human nature (109). In fact, he maintains that novelists, poets and playwrights possess an intuitive understanding of what makes us human that gets translated into their depiction of their characters, their lives and their experiences within their own little fictional

worlds with a great accuracy (109). This basic knowledge of human nature also appears to be allowing the artists some sense of control over their audience, considering how necessary it is to know exactly how to keep a hand ‘firmly on the nape of the reader’s neck’ (Golding, *Target* 131), how to never let go of the reader’s attention once secured (131), and how to manipulate the reader’s response, emotions and sympathies in a manner that serves the purpose for which the work was created (Carroll, *Darwinism* 109). Following this logic, attempts at locating the text within an evolutionary understanding of human nature might prove illuminating in terms of deducing the common psychological factors involved in the assessment, evaluation and the general reception of the text as a whole. They can also prove helpful in terms of understanding the basics underlying how characters, as ‘a locus for the organization of human experience’ (19), are judged and perceived. Moreover, adaptationists emphasize that characters in literary texts should not to be regarded as ‘autonomous textual creations,’ but should rather be tackled as ‘reflections of genuine human beings who—consistently confronted with conflict and choice—must make decisions that impact their capacity for survival’ (Mallory-Kani and Womack). According to David Barash and Nanelle Barash:

Even the loftiest products of human imagination are, first of all, emanations of that gooey, breathing, eating, sleeping, defecating, reproducing, evolving, and evolved creature known as *Homo sapiens*. We aren't idealized, ethereal essences but genuine biological beings, shaped by evolution and twisted and gnarled by life itself. This is why the most damning observation that can be made about a character in a novel (or play or movie) is that he or she isn't believable, which is another way of saying that for fiction to make sense, it must accord with a kind of evolutionary reality. Too much artificial straightness won't do (8).¹⁵

For Golding, the novel is an excellent vehicle for testing and exploring common accepted notions about human nature, a thought experiment for proving their validity or the lack of it through realistically designed characters, placed in carefully constructed social and environmental conditions that are supposed to highlight how some of the essential or

¹⁵ There are, of course, exceptions to this rule, but they are noted by the Barashes as rare. They maintain, in fact, that even these rare examples offer a ‘paradoxical confirmation’ of the rule of imitation (7-8). Achilles, for example, though ‘physically inhuman,’ is still granted a realistically human psychology (8). He possesses many recognizably human traits like ‘intense competitiveness, a penchant for sulking...and a tendency toward anger when deprived of a loved one’ (8).

universal aspects shared by all of mankind foster a certain response or behaviour. He states in 'Belief and Creativity,' for example, that one of the essential factors driving the creation of the novel for him is his desire to know, understand and reveal what humanity is really about:

What man is, whatever man is under the eye of heaven, that I burn to know and that—I do not say this lightly—I would endure knowing. The themes closest to my purpose, to my imagination have stemmed from that preoccupation, have been of such a sort that they might move me a little nearer that knowledge. They have been themes of man at extremity, man tested like building material, taken into laboratory and used to destruction; man isolated, man obsessed, man drowning in a literal sea or in the sea of his own ignorance (*Target* 199).¹⁶

Golding also maintains to Haffenden that the novelist is always 'unwillingly...engaged in the process of being human' (106), and that it follows from there that almost everything the novelist writes would, in one way or another, be concerned with some of 'the basic questions of human behaviour and human life' (119), or 'else you're writing articles about chess' (106). Writing about the human condition means exploring human relations, and this is where the novel as a vehicle for communicating and exploring moral conceptions and questions comes in (Golding in Grove); but if the novel is to succeed in fulfilling this particular purpose, it first has to present a realistic depiction of humanity or communicate its premises, morals and purposes through 'people who convince' (Golding in Biles, *Talk* 8). This principle, Golding states, was basically the governing factor driving the creation of his first and most successful novel *Lord of the Flies* (1954) where the use of 'the literary convention of boys stranded on an island' was only secondary to his decision to utilize his knowledge of how boys behave for the purpose of proving that it is human nature, not the social system, that is the root cause of our problems (*Gates* 78-9). Golding's familiarity with boys was made possible, of course, by virtue of his being a father, a son, and a schoolmaster. This, he maintains, not only allowed him 'to understand and know [boys] with an awful precision,' but also granted him a position from which he could revise Ballantyne's flawed conception of human nature by using 'real boys' instead of the lifeless 'paper cutouts' that Ballantyne relied on (78-9). Nevertheless, although realism seems to have been the preferred fictional mode for Golding, as with others of his generation such as Iris Murdoch, there is often a gap between his stated preference and

¹⁶ What is interesting perhaps about this quotation is the idea that extreme situations expose the essential being of human individuals, requiring that they throw off socially acquired habits or disguises, a theme that is of course explored in Shakespeare's plays such as *King Lear*.

his literary practices, suggesting that in order to convey his vision of human nature, he had to push beyond the conventions of social or psychological realism. For several critics, particularly when it comes to characterization, there are moments when Golding's characters appear to be falling short of his own standards, possessing a prophetic vision, a profound insight into the human condition and an essential and indisputable goodness that is uncharacteristic of the instinctual cruelty that is argued for elsewhere by Golding. Their creation, Golding maintains, however, is supposed to be an amalgamation of all the good and kindness that he had found in the people around him. They are a device or a 'plot mechanism' within the context of the novel that can help in foiling his other more realistic characters and in highlighting the unfortunate, yet universal and instinctual roots of their fallen nature (Golding in Baker, 'Interview').¹⁷ It is possible, of course, to detect the same tendency even in the construction of the supposedly realistic characters in the early fabular works given how they sometimes appear to have been cast as a type rather than granted the depth and marked individuality of the characters of Golding's more social novels. It is important to note, though, that such characters are meant to be Everyman figures in a fable, and as such, they do, in the end, help in reinforcing the claim of universality and in highlighting the instinctual roots of humanity's ailments.

Problems with the Evolutionary Paradigm

Examining Golding's novels through a pure adaptationist lens is not unproblematic. The field, for one thing, is fraught with controversies stemming for the most part from its reliance on evolutionary psychology as the pivotal discipline offering a bridge between the humanities and the natural and social sciences. Evolutionary psychology has been subjected to vigorous critiques over the years.¹⁸ This is possibly the case because a good number of the hypotheses proposed regarding the development of certain behaviours by evolutionary psychologists are regarded as 'just so stories' that are difficult to verify and test and that are not adequately

¹⁷ In an earlier interview with Kermode, Golding maintained that Simon would most definitely be 'comprehensible' and understandable to the illiterate reader who believes in the reality of the spiritual realm and the existence of a good God ('Meaning' 9-10). His analysis of Nathaniel, who is as much of a saint as Simon, years later, however, seems to contradict this very notion to a certain extent, considering how he refers to him as more of a plot mechanism and less of a realistic depiction.

¹⁸ For Brian Boyd, author of *On the Origin of Stories* (2009), and one of the main contributors to the adaptationist program, a clear distinction must be drawn between the narrow discipline of Evolutionary Psychology that is normally associated with concepts such as massive modularity or mismatch theory, and with the much broader research program of evolutionary psychology that includes: 'evolutionary theory, ethology, linguistics, artificial intelligence, game theory, evolutionary anthropology, evolutionary economics, neurophysiology, analytic and experimental philosophy, evolutionary epistemology, and many branches of psychology—clinical, comparative, developmental, evolutionary, personality, and social' (39).

backed by solid evidence (Crews). As a result, employing them in a program that claims consilience to be one of its principal aims might not help much in realizing the program's goals because it contradicts its logic of '[using] the most up-to-date and agreed-upon science' in its attempt to rescue the field of literary study from its state of autonomy and irrelevance (Kramnick, 'Reply'). Evolutionary psychology has also been criticised for its reductionist account of human behaviour, its tendency to focus on genetic rather than cultural factors and its propensity to seek universals and ignore individual cases (Lickliter and Honeycutt). The same charges were also directed against the adaptationist program in its application of evolutionary psychology to literary texts, or rather in its seeking confirmation of the discipline's hypotheses in artistic creations (Kramnick, 'Reply'), to be focused on human universals and to be reducing the depth and richness of literary creations to matters of survival and reproductive success (Kramnick, 'Reply'; Goodheart). Moreover, there was very quickly increasing dissatisfaction with the way the adaptationists use the discipline to study texts 'empirically,' as in the case of Eugene Goodheart who questioned the ability of the language of science to capture the branching intricacy of the humanities. Science, after all, almost always seeks regularities and is likely to result, as such, in compromising the complexity of literature and the practice of literary criticism (Jannidas). Similarly, Fredrick Crews' 'Apriorism for Empiricists' claims that studying literature from an adaptationist perspective is like extracting data for the fields of anthropology and psychology without recognizing the features that make a work of art unique. Crews also accuses the adaptationists of selecting texts that obey a Darwinian logic and of refusing to admit the limitations of the field by examining more challenging texts such as 'Kubla Khan' or *Waiting for Godot*.

In responding to these charges, adaptationists note that their initial focus on human universals was deemed a necessary counterargument to the postmodernist view of social and cultural constructivism, as well as an effort to establish the biological roots of art so as to analyse it as a behaviour. They also note that reductionism is inescapable in any attempt 'at producing real knowledge,' and that '[even] the most rudimentary form of literary commentary—analytic summary or paraphrase—constitutes an exercise in reduction' (Carroll, *Reading* 29).¹⁹ Moreover, Carroll maintains that he is aware that an evolutionary

¹⁹ This, they maintain, is most definitely the case because interpretation is a highly dynamic and complex process that requires considering different relations between the text, the world and the reader, and the enormous and almost infinite possibilities and directions that such relations can hold (Nordlund). As a result, 'both traditional humanists and poststructuralists' can be considered as possessing 'their own typical forms of reductionism' which they might have set up in accordance with the kind of elements, relations, or possibilities that they are attuned to stressing in the interpretation process. Consequently, they may be regarded as different from the adaptationists 'only in the terms to which they seek to reduce texts' (Carroll, *Reading* 29; Nordlund).

understanding of human nature is not without its flaws or ‘absolutely true’ because no account of the human experience can ever attain such a status (*Darwinism* 24). He still notes, however, that because an evolutionary account of life and human experience is the most ‘adequate’ and ‘complete’ explanation provided so far, it was adopted as a basis for the evaluation of any consideration or theory of literature and culture before it is allowed integration into the Darwinian paradigm (24). He also seems to suggest, judging by his reservation regarding the field of Cognitive Poetics, which he believes tends to stress its cognitive engagements more so than its evolutionary affiliations (*Reading* 8), that any interpretive effort must ‘overtly’ ground itself on a Darwinian or evolutionary logic because ‘muting’ or ‘minimizing’ such aspects means downplaying ‘the explanation that matters’ (Jackson). This created a problem for the other adaptationists who share Carroll’s vision of consilience, but who do not agree with his extreme version of adaptationism. In fact, Carroll’s insistence on Darwinizing every explanation and on tracing it to a biological level have resulted in the negative reception of the program’s proponents as a group of fundamentalists who are intolerant of other valid approaches to the study of art, and who are set on converting non-subscribers to their extreme and ultra-Darwinian ways (Gottschall, ‘Consilience’; Jackson). There is also Carroll’s antagonism towards postmodern theory, his ambitious goal of altering the literary paradigm and his insistence on subordinating all other approaches to an evolutionary metatheory to consider, and which seem to have either fuelled doubts regarding the theory’s potential of enriching the field of literary study, or contributed to the total rejection of adaptationism altogether (Carroll, *Reading* 5; Gottschall, ‘Consilience’; Jackson).

In an attempt to argue against Carroll’s ambitious take on consilience, scholars who are somewhat drawn to an adaptationist persuasion such as Jonathan Gottschall, Marcus Nordlund and Edward Slingerland strictly emphasize that the purpose of the program is to help the field of literary study emulate the success and cohesiveness of the sciences. They believe it would be helpful to ground its existing schools and approaches on a firmer basis and to ameliorate its academic pursuits with more empirical methods that can further nourish its disinterested spirit and contribute to the production of progressive and objective knowledge (Gottschall, ‘Consilience’; Nordlund; Slingerland). They strictly maintain, however, that studying literature within such a frame of reference does not necessarily entail that every explanation has to appeal to some Darwinian logic or be ‘be carried out in the terms of some discipline farther down the explanatory hierarchy’ (Gottschall, ‘Consilience’). On the contrary, they assert that although evolutionary investigations can often prove insightful, certain scholastic literary efforts might benefit more from being conducted ‘within the

traditional bounds' of the humanities rather than being carried in accordance with 'the new sciences of the mind' (Gottschall, 'Consilience'; Slingerland). Moreover, moderate adaptationists, they assert, do not wish to subsume all other investigations of art, replace existing schools, or even realize Carroll's ambitious aim of taking the Darwinian paradigm to a point where literary criticism and adaptationism can become 'synonymous' (Gottschall, 'Consilience'; Nordlund; Slingerland). On the contrary, they do believe that there are other ways of attaining consilience and that an evolutionary literary theory is not the sole or ultimate way of doing so (Gottschall, 'Consilience'). A similar sentiment was echoed by Jonathan Kramnick and Gabrielle Starr, who though they are clearly in favour of exploring the different relations between the sciences and the study of literature and how such relations can prove illuminating for both fields, are still of the opinion that adaptationism is only one possible relation to explore and a very limited one. Their reasoning behind such a conclusion is that adaptationism dictates, 'as it is currently configured,' that 'no form of literary study should take place without being at least in conformity with the principles of evolutionary theory' (Starr; Kramnick, 'Reply'). Furthermore, both Kramnick and Starr maintain that the problem of relying on a faulty conception of human nature and the mind, a matter which had been specifically targeted by adaptationists as one of the fundamental reasons why the humanities are in decline, may, in fact, be solved by paying more attention to what had been uncovered and established in different fields of psychology, and not specifically the evolutionary discipline. In fact, they assert that just because the arts are produced by a mind that had been shaped by natural selection, does not necessarily dictate that every literary investigation be conducted within the bounds of an evolutionary paradigm, especially when there are other disciplines such as cognitive neuroscience that can provide much firmer and less controversial foundations than evolutionary psychology. They also believe that 'there's no need' for literary scholars to 'give up what [they] do best should [they] care to look at what others do' (Kramnick, 'Reply'), considering how there are times when there is 'more explanatory power' to their own means of inquiry rather than those dictated by the sciences, or derived from other disciplines (Starr).

My interest in the adaptationist program sprang out of the desire to develop an understanding of fiction in general and Golding's creations in particular through a psychological scope that is more in accordance with contemporary psychology than the commonly deployed yet outdated Freudian, Lacanian or Jungian frameworks. Indeed, it was the field's scientific spirit as well as its proponents' insistence on opening the humanities up to the most current and up-to-date contributions in other fields of knowledge that initially

appealed to me given the promise that such an initiative held in relation to bringing the two cultures together and to helping the humanities break out of its state of autonomy. There was also the focus on the adapted mind as the source of the creative act that further motivated me to engage in the adaptationist paradigm, not only because of the insightful input that such a focus had rendered in relation to the origin and function of art, but also because of the significance it held regarding restoring the author's authority and asserting his or her importance against the notion of the author's death or dismissal. Moreover, evolutionary psychology seemed to offer particularly promising perspectives through which to explore Goldings' novels, especially his more fabular creations, focused on asserting the universality of evil against the prevailing efforts at associating it with social systems such as Nazism rather than human nature. Indeed, it was after reading *The Inheritors* (1955) that it occurred to me that Golding's work provided a rich source for thinking through evolutionary theory as it has developed since the postwar years, and also as it was developing at the time when Golding began to produce his novels in the early 1950s. However, aside from the problem of just how controversial the field actually turned out to be, I discovered, after I began to examine Golding's entire oeuvre, that sole reliance on an evolutionary perspective would be highly reductionist, and not in a good way. This is particularly the case for his later creations which seem to have been intentionally written as a way of challenging simplistic interpretations in order to assert the complexity of texts as a reflection of the complexity of life itself, and to encourage a pluralistic approach to both life and art (Redpath 30; Clements 95). This necessitated moving beyond the limited scope of evolutionary theory, and incorporating a range of views from diverse, yet consilient schools in contemporary psychology as a means of addressing the complex spiritual, social and cultural realities that Golding was becoming increasingly interested in, particularly at the later point of his career as a novelist. My interests in this thesis, to put it bluntly, are not strictly in line with the adaptationists' views and vision, but are more of an attempt at exploring one possible way out of many possible others by which interdisciplinarity can illuminate certain aspects of the texts in question, and locate the author in the scientific contexts of production of his time. If I appear to be focusing on an evolutionary dimension in specific arguments at certain points of my research, it is not because I hope simply to appeal to a biological level of explanation in keeping with the ambitious version of adaptationism. On the contrary, most of the evolutionary arguments I engage in are supposed to explain how Golding's knowledge of evolution, which he had obtained by virtue of his training in the sciences and his being raised by a Darwinian father, is being utilized and critiqued in subtle ways in his novels.

My goals for this thesis are simple. I hope to analyse Golding's conception of human nature in his fictional writings, and in close detail in three of his novels: *The Inheritors* (1955), *Pincher Martin* (1956) and *Free Fall* (1959). This involves providing the biological and cognitive foundations for the views that Golding had clearly conveyed within the confines of these novels and outside of them. It also involves tackling his characters as representations of genuine human beings whose dispositions are basically a product of a mind naturally selected for, interacting with unique environmental and social conditions. An important step towards accomplishing this goal is to locate Golding's work, particularly *The Inheritors*, in the scientific, psychological and evolutionary thinking of his age, and to try to understand the kind of arguments that Golding might have been advocating, opposing or even employing in his experimental exploration of human nature. My preference for biological, cognitive and experimental existential psychology stems, for the most part, from a concern with producing a reading that is that is in accordance with what had been known and established in the social and natural sciences, and that is in keeping with a desire to at least entangle if not reconcile the field of literary study with other fields of knowledge. My choice of novels is designed to demonstrate most clearly a pattern in Golding's grasp of cognitive development, with *The Inheritors* providing the foundation upon which the interpretation of the other two novels is to be based. *Pincher Martin* and *Free Fall* are read as attempts to construct two fictional characters as individuals who, though they have so much in common by virtue of their inherent nature and their shared morally and spiritually barren age, are deliberately shown as diverging in two different directions by choices that are freely made. A common theme tying all of my chapters together is morality, or the biological understanding of it, not only because of Golding's interest in moral questions, but also because he clearly considered humanity to be as instinctually moral as it is evil (Golding in Baker, 'Interview').

The first chapter of my thesis will mainly provide an evolutionary understanding of the fall, a running theme in virtually all of Golding's novels, by associating evil with the rise of modern intelligence. Such an association will be examined, first, in relation with the historical events and turbulences characterizing the age, and second, in terms of the archaeological, anthropological and biological findings of both the period that marked the production of the texts Golding was reacting to, and the one framing his own. The second chapter will deal with the simultaneous rise of evil and morality within the context of *The Inheritors*. It will present the Neanderthals' lack of a clear and strict moral code as a major indication of their innocence or unfallen state, based on the evolutionary proposition that the enforcement of morality is a behaviour that evolved to counter the rise of aggression. The third chapter will deal with

pathological exceptions by holding Christopher Martin's immense self-centeredness and egotism as representative of a Narcissistic Personality Disorder. It is a pathological condition tackled evolutionarily as a maladaptive manifestation of a supposedly adaptive trait that fosters in Christopher's case an antisocial attitude and an incapacity to tolerate those compromising his self-image. The fourth chapter will once again address the connection between evil and modern intelligence, this time from a developmental perspective. The matter will be targetted, first, by comparing Sammy's psychological and mental state as a child to that of his teenage days, and second, by highlighting how his experience of guilt as an adult is notably different from that of his child self. Finally, I will once again address the significance of interdisciplinary research and its constructive purpose of establishing some points of productive conversation in the relation between the sciences and literary theory. In fact, the issue will be undertaken in light of Golding's later novels which contain some of his clearest statements regarding literary criticism and art as an instinct.

CHAPTER ONE

The Biological Psychology of Evil

We must produce *homo moralis*, the human being who cannot kill his own kind, nor exploit them nor rob them. Then no one will need to write utopias, satires or antiutopias for we shall be inhabitants of utopia as long as we can stay on the bicycle; and perhaps a little—not much, but a little—dull.

William Golding, 'Utopias and Antiutopias'.²⁰

Following the war, Golding developed a deep interest in the idea of human nature that might be regarded as eventually producing in his fictional writings a familiar mood of the pessimistic. The war to Golding was an experience of growing up, of seeing things clearly, of abandoning certain beliefs and embracing others, and most importantly, of having 'one's nose rubbed in the human condition' (Golding in Biles, *Talk* 33). Golding went into the war with the conviction that the perfection of humanity is achievable so long as the pursuit of an ideal social structure is possible; however, the war experience destroyed his earlier vision and left him feeling it had been nothing more than a naive illusion, simply a denial of the reality of a tradition of regarding human nature through the lens of original sin. One might think that a summation of the effects of that newest experience, therefore, would be analogous to some sort of a conversion, a radical change of belief marked along the lines of a typical before and after transition, but to put it in those words would be oversimplifying it. The five years of service had gradually built upon what he already knew, confirmed his harboured uncertainties and showed him a side of human nature that he may have initially refused to believe existed (34).²¹ It was perhaps then that Golding became convinced of the inadequacy of the Wellsian tradition and the naive optimism that he had acquired from his father and his scientific training at Oxford in explaining the human condition; and though he turned to religiousness,

²⁰ *Moving Target*, 184.

²¹ Golding's views regarding the rigidity and inadequacy of rationalism that so characterize his novels, for example, are also found in the poetry he published prior to the dreadful experience of serving in the navy (Baker, *Study* xiii).

he did not seek solace in any of the established religions for he found them to be characterized by the same misleading selectivity that marked the rationality of the sciences.

Golding returned from the war a changed man who wished to speak of his new found realizations but was reluctant to do so for he was doubtful of his capacity to communicate with readers. He did not think it was possible to bring people to understand what he took then as a 'private idea' of his; and even though he pursued what he thought was best at the time, which is to engage with what people wished to read rather than what he wanted to say, he did not find the undertaking as fulfilling as he had hoped it to be. It was only when the three books he wrote out of this misconceived notion were rejected that he began to realize that it was time he wrote his 'own books and nobody else's' (15). The first of these books was *Lord of the Flies* (1954), which might be viewed as a perfect depiction of his belief that that any investigation into human nature should be more concerned with why man has a capacity for evil rather than dwelling on the question of 'why he sometimes does good' (106). Golding thought it logical to take on the task of holding a mirror up to humanity 'when everybody was thanking God they weren't Nazis' in order to show that the atrocities that mankind are capable of are made possible by 'certain deficiencies' that could turn even the proclaimed good into the very same scorned eugenicists (34-5). For Golding, these defects came to be seen as an inextricable part of what defines mankind and not simply to be explained in terms of social ills; nor could they be purely blamed on the forces of history.²² It was with this novel that Golding resurrected humanity's original sin and announced the demise of Rousseau's noble savage.

Lord of the Flies was first rejected by twenty-one publishers before it caught the attention of Charles Monteith of Faber and Faber; though it took time to rise to critical acclaim, it won much praise from prominent critics and literary figures soon after it was published (McCarron, *Golding* 2; Carey, *Golding* 150-2). The novel tells the story of a group of schoolboys whose evacuation plane crashes on a deserted island with no sign of civilization or the restraining presence of the social sanctions they once knew. The boys initially hold on to the remnants of the civilized world within them, elect their own leader, and proceed to build a shelter and a signal fire, but they soon give in to their inner demons and descend into savagery. Grippled by a terror of their own creation, the boys lose sight of a common purpose and can only think of appeasing an illusory beast through a destructive ritual of hunt, blood

²² However, Golding strictly stresses that these two factors remain crucial for they could either nurture this inherent defect or suppress it (in Biles, *Talk* 38, 45-9).

and violence that not only leads to the murdering of one boy and the crushing of another, but also to their setting the whole forest in flames in a mindless pursuit of the desire to smoke out the leader they once elected in order to kill him. Fortunately, the arrival of the naval officer brings this barbaric frenzy to an end and saves the life of the boy, but Golding refuses to grant his readers peace or closure for he insists with the reminder of the loss of innocence that mankind's internal flaws will ensure the persistence of evil and its haunting realities.

Having his 'fable' end with such a note of uneasiness might have been meant to force readers to ponder the shaky basis of morality and humanity's bleak future, but that is not all. The reference Golding makes to 'the days of innocence' is fraught with irony given the fact that the horrendous events of the novel were acted out by a group of boys who—according to what Golding perceives as a common misconception—should know nothing of evil (Golding in Biles, *Talk* 39-40). He clearly states that people's tendency to mourn the age of innocence is a mere self-deception, a denial of their own terrifying capacities, and an escape from their mad reality into a time when evil was non-existent (40). Bent on robbing mankind of this kind of delusion, Golding published *The Inheritors* (1955) a year after *Lord of the Flies*, where he paints a vivid picture of a pre-fallen stage of innocence that precedes the corrupting existence of sin and evil. Ironically, however, the two radically different states of purity and sin are not portrayed as phases that our ancestors go through, but are brought in sharp contrast to one another with the additional inclusion of the Neanderthals as a distinct species in a manner that brings to mind the progressionist Victorian fiction of H.G. Wells. Golding seemingly abides by the Wellsian tradition in his depiction of a prehistoric setting where a group of Neanderthals whose appearance brings to mind the 'pre-men' of *The Grisly Folk* are pulled into a clash with the rational, intelligent and advanced Homo Sapiens. However, despite the fact that Golding subjects his 'people' to the same fate as Wells' folk, he does not do so out of sheer belief in the superiority of modern man. By having the simple, naive and innocent Neanderthals meet their death at the hands of Homo Sapiens, Golding not only denies his readers the 'bogus history' of innocence that they might have expected to encounter in their ancestors (39), but also highlights the possibility that those same ancestors might be held responsible for bringing the quality of innocence to its demise.

Shattering humanity's myths about its place and existence in the universe remains Golding's primary concern, but his preoccupations gain a whole new depth and intensity once readers come to the realization that the plots Golding uses to deliver his knowledge of humanity's original sins are derived from past texts that he regards as reflecting false ideologies. However, lecturing readers about their delusions, states Golding, is not an easy

endeavour since that would require certain techniques by which readers experience the full emotional impact of the process rather than having the point made clear by direct statement (66-7). One technique that Golding uses to fulfil this purpose is that of goading the readers' expectations in one direction before shocking them with the revelation that they were being fooled into creating their own misconceptions due in part to the same defects that they share with his characters. The novel that exhibits this tendency the most is *Pincher Martin* (1956) where Golding reveals at the end that his main character has been dead all along, and that the painful events which span the entirety of the book are more of a purgatorial experience of a person who does not believe in the existence of God. The fact remains, however, that some of the success of achieving this kind of effect is partially dependent on the readers' familiarity with the same past plots that Golding had engaged in rewriting. The most notable examples of such texts are perhaps R.M. Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* (1858) and H.G. Wells' *The Grisly Folk* (1921) which Golding uses to test the false assumptions of their creators and prove their incomprehensibility in light of the madness that was brought about by the subsequent world wars. *The Coral Island* follows the adventure of three English boys who are the sole survivors of a shipwrecking incident at the Pacific and depicts their effort at living under seemingly challenging conditions while maintaining an ordered society. As in *Lord of the Flies*, the presence of evil is of crucial significance and is shown to disrupt the peaceful life of the boys; however, it does not reveal itself as part of the boys' nature, but is rather introduced in the stereotypical depiction of the natives as cannibalistic savages, an aspect that is believed to be aimed at serving the function of reinforcing the supremacy of the colonizers and the legitimacy of imperialism. Because evil in *The Coral Island* is externalized and located in some lesser race that was not fortunate enough to attain the intellectual and moral progress of the white race which kept the boys from descending to barbarism, Golding found it logical to reproduce Ballantyne's island for the same group of children and show how they would actually behave given the same circumstances. Similarly, Golding's disagreement with Wells' *Outline of History* (1919) and *The Grisly Folk*—which depict humanity's rise to intelligence and rationality as some fortunate attainment that brought about a superior being to the bestial and cannibalistic Neanderthals—gave rise to *The Inheritors* where Golding goes further in internalizing evil within the claimed superiority of modern man by utilizing the same evolutionary argument that Wells used to cast evil out of the human race.

Golding's commitment to exposing the roots of evil and the myth of innocence along with his belief in the doctrine of original sin, the fall, and free will have earned him the reputation

of being a moral and religious author. Monteith actually recalls feeling surprised when he met Golding for the first time to discuss the changes that should be made to *Lord of the Flies*, titled then as *Strangers from Within*, for he expected to see a clergyman due to the evident theological nature of the work (Monteith 60). However, critics such as Redpath, Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor warn against declaring Golding a Christian moralist for that would obscure his desire to show reality for what it actually is and which could only be possible, according to Golding, if the writer frees his mind from the 'rigid patterns' imposed by 'any accepted belief,' being political, moral or even religious.²³ Though Golding is claimed to have found in Christianity the metaphors that could capture the truth of the human condition, interpreting his works through a purely biblical lens can blur the significance of some other sources that are either located within the literary realm or drawn from certain other disciplines (Baker, *Study* 15-7).²⁴ Moreover, succumbing to a rigid theological inclination may not only restrict the richness of the texts or fail to capture the magnitude of Golding's creations fully, but also result in a reading that partially 'applies' and 'with a great deal of "squeezing" to each novel' (Redpath 207). These statements are not meant to undermine Golding's reliance on biblical allusions, but are rather intended to show that overindulgence in the search for a theological structure may obscure the fact that Golding is criticising Christianity as much as he is drawing on it. The best examples that perhaps illustrate Golding's tendency to entertain a concept while questioning it at the same time are his first two novels whose titles initially communicate an adherence to a biblical perspective before they acquire an ironic reality that is bound to emerge as the plot engages in the simultaneous assertion and betrayal of the biblical notion in question. The title assigned to Golding's first novel brings to mind the demonic figure of Beelzebub (literally translated as lord of the flies) whose rapport with evil in the Judeo-Christian tradition earns him a similar affinity in the novel, evident in the haunting chaos that breaks out on the Edenic island as the boys give into his influence.²⁵ Unlike what is commonly believed in the Judeo-Christian sources, though,

²³ Baker, *Study* 15-6; Redpath 207; Kinkead Weekes and Gregor 86; Golding in Webster 15.

²⁴ The fall, for example, is not only communicated in biblical terms, as Baker notes, but is also derived from the Greek tradition (*Study* 15-6). Actually, Baker's work is more focused on showing how Greek literature influenced the fiction and poetry of William Golding. Charles De Paolo also dedicates a whole chapter to studying the evolutionary sources that Golding might have consulted in the creation of *The Inheritors*. Moreover, Carey suggests that the existential writings of Erich Fromm might have played a role in moulding Golding's belief regarding the fall of mankind (*Golding* 122). There are also other views in support of the notion that despite Golding's dislike of Freudian theories, his work seems to be Freudian, or rather psychoanalytical, in essence (Sugimura; Rosenfield; Crane). Some of these possible influences, mainly the existential and the evolutionary, will be explored in detail later.

²⁵ The title *Lord of the Flies* was not actually chosen by Golding, but was suggested to him by Alan Pringle. This does not mean, however, that Golding did not rely on the concept in the novel (Monteith 62).

Beelzebub is not portrayed as a typical devilish figure that has to be battled and overcome, but is rather identified as the inner darkness that compels humanity to lock itself in a history of violence and bloodshed.²⁶ In the key scene where Simon confronts the pig's head, Golding actually has Beelzebub himself mock people's denial of his being a part of their nature and their relentless effort to cast him out as some external entity that can be annihilated:

'Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill!' said the head. ...
'You knew, didn't you? I'm part of you? Close, close, close! I'm the reason why it's no go? Why things are what they are?' (177).

It is also important to consider Golding's decision to include among his cast of characters members of a Christian choir who despite the tradition they represent, end up being the first to display the symptoms of humanity's illness and become the most violent group on the island. Targeting Christian boys in particular may have been partially motivated by Ballantyne's choice of characters and his simplistic association between violence and paganism; but there remains a possibility that Golding might have intended the subverted relation to vanquish the comforting illusions that are offered on *The Coral Island* by the Christian tradition (McCarron, *Golding* 5). A support for this assumption is found by Baker in the parallelism between the succession of the catastrophic events revealed by Golding and the prophetic biblical account of the apocalypse that is disclosed in the Book of Revelations. In this Christian source, the birth of two is announced, with one rising from the sea, waging war against God and killing the saints before a second beast appears from the earth, erecting a figure in the image of the sea demon and calling people to its worship. The revelation foresees each beast reigning for a generation before the arrival of the second coming that will deliver humanity out of its brutish nightmare. This second coming is mirrored in *Lord of the Flies* in the appearance of the naval officer who initially seems to be offering the promise of putting an end to the boys' nightmarish reality in about the same manner as that of the biblical prophecy. A careful look, however, shows Golding's second coming as offering little of the comfort of the biblical revelations, for it is brought about by a malignant rescuer who carries the same defects that led to the escalation of violence in the first place (Baker, *Study* 16-7).

Golding's second novel, much like its predecessor, carries on the defamiliarization process that has become so characteristic of his novels, and continues to address, test and experiment

²⁶ The fact remains, however, that while it is possible that Golding might have opposed the idea of an external satanic agent, he still found the biblical notion of original sin an accurate diagnosis of the human condition.

with certain accepted beliefs and assumptions to reintroduce them in a new light. What might be noticeably reminiscent of *Lord of the Flies*, however, is that its treatment and questioning of certain biblical elements in particular are as evident in the title as they are in the text. Whereas Golding's choice of *The Inheritors* communicates humanity's attainment of aggressive dispositions and reaffirms the doctrine of original sin that has become a marked feature of mankind's history, it still raises an alarming opposition to the biblical prophecy 'Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth' (Matthew 5:5), whose optimism, brought in association with that of Wells, adds a sting of irony in light of the devastating fate that Golding's meek undergo (Bufkin, 'Irony Art'). This prophecy, however, is not the only biblical assumption that Golding seeks to assess. One of the central aspects of *The Inheritors* is its attitude towards the biblical fall which is communicated in a distinguishably unique alteration of the account in a manner that not only violates the orthodox version with its omission of the temptation of an external Satanic agent, but also raises doubts about the validity of the claimed past innocence of humanity's ancestry. Though claims of an early treatment of the biblical fall were raised in relation to *Lord of the Flies*, the fact remains that *The Inheritors* is far more elaborate in that regard due to a number of factors, the most important of which is Golding's assertion of it as the most important idea in his correspondence with Monteith over the emended version of the novel, and his insistence that it be clear (Carey, *Golding* 178). Other factors are presented in the possibility that the island *The Inheritors* shares with *Lord of the Flies* as the primary setting for the unfolding events may also stand for the lost Garden of Eden given the striking similarity between the biblical account of corruption and the re-enactment of it in a number of key scenes where the Neanderthals stumble upon the existence of evil (Dickson 31). Further support for this notion can be located in the claimed symbolic representation of the tree from which Lok and Fa watch the horrendous acts of the Homo Sapiens as the biblical tree that granted Adam and Eve the knowledge of good and evil. It can also be detected in the crucial symbolic function of the waterfall whose monstrosity is brought in a subtle association with the cruelty of modern man's ancestry before it is revealed directly in the Neanderthal's perception of the new people as like the fall. Though a number of critics seem to be in agreement over the allegorical nature of the work,²⁷ differences arise in the manner by which Golding's treatment is to be tackled and interpreted. Peter Green, for example, highlights Golding's mockery of

²⁷ See Dickson; Babb; Kinkaed-Weeks and Gregor; Baker, *Study*; McCarron, *Golding*; S. Boyd; Medcalf, Green.

the human illusion of external evil by allegorizing the scene where the Neanderthal couple drink the Homo Sapiens' fermented honey and give in to a rush of aggressive tendencies. Linking this scene to the temptation of Adam and Eve is said to represent the Homo Sapiens as the real devils or 'serpents' whose presence and creations pose something akin to a bad influence that compromises the innocence of the Neanderthals and tempts them into the forbidden acts of savagery, cruelty and aggression (Green 68). As fitting as that may sound in light of Golding's views of humanity, however, Bufkin seems to be of the opinion that though the fall is the central theme of *The Inheritors*, reading the novel as an allegory of the story of Adam and Eve is an 'irresistible temptation' that should not be given into ('Ironic Art'). One reason why he opposes the notion is his belief that neither species exhibits a fall or a loss of innocence, and that a more logical function to creating them is to have them brought into contrast to one another so that the defects of mankind can be highlighted. Bufkin finds a support for his reading in the fact that the Homo Sapiens are shown as carrying their characteristic violent traits from the first moment they make their appearance on the island, an aspect thought to be perfectly appropriate given Golding's denial of a past innocence. But what is more interesting in Bufkin's reading is his conclusion that the Neanderthal's momentary conversion to the new people's ways should not be read as a fall since their succumbing to that state is not brought about by an internal defect, but by an external force whose effects wear off as soon as it is expelled out of their insides. The irony that this reading offers lies in its attempt at highlighting the essentially good nature of the Neanderthals through utilizing the same illusion of external evil that has come to characterize humanity's religious worldviews and belief systems (Bufkin, 'Ironic Art'; Babb 41-2; Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 106).²⁸

Aside from striving to disintegrate the pattern of self-deception provided by the comforting illusions of the biblical prophecies and history of mankind, Golding's novels are also meant to target the opposite extreme of scientific rationality that created the Victorian optimism exhibited in the creations of Ballantyne and Wells. Despite claims of scientific objectivity, Golding found in Victorian optimism a naive rationality, motivated by a diluted philosophy that the survival of mankind throughout the long history of evolution and environmental fluctuations should not be taken as less than a testament to the superiority of modern man. Moreover, the belief that the human race has advanced since ancient times in its

²⁸ In an interview with Baker, Golding states that there is hope that some goodness has survived through the little Neanderthal baby that the Homo Sapiens are shown to have taken with them. His statement actually supports Bufkin and Babb's reading that the Neanderthals do not fall.

‘heroic’ struggle to conquer the obstacles to its survival has resulted in the emergence of not only the false assumption that the process of evolution is driven towards the perfection of species, but also the misconceived association between evolutionary forces and progress. Golding’s engagement with these assumptions began at an early age due to the rationalistic upbringing that he had undergone at an atheist ‘science-worshipping’ home, but he states that such an involvement, which had ultimately led to his majoring in science at Oxford, was done against his ‘instincts’ in order to placate his Wellsian father (Carey, ‘Talks’ 171; Carey, *Golding* 179). It was what Golding described as ‘a condemnation ... of a human relationship’ that led him to embrace rationalism despite his struggling against it as a child, a notion that he explores and communicates in his fourth novel *Free Fall* (1959) through Sam’s relationship with the schoolmaster Nick, whom Golding admits to have based on his father, Alec (Baker, ‘Interview’; Carey, ‘Talks’ 171-2).²⁹ One of the major outcomes of the influence that compelled Golding to somehow ‘half-convince’ himself that he was an atheist and a rationalist was his coming across Wells’ *Outline of History* which proved to be quite influential in not only shaping his youth, but in creating his novels as well (Golding in Carey, ‘Talks’; 171, in Biles, *Talk* 4). *The Outline*, to Golding, was more like ‘the rationalist’s gospel in excelsis’ which was held by his father as ‘pure truth’ despite its ‘nonsensical’ pronouncements of evolution, progress and perfectibility (qtd in Baker, *Study* 20; Carey, *Golding* 179; Baker, ‘Interview’). It should be noted, however, that although Golding came to reject Wells’ reductive vision, he maintains that his scrutiny is solely reserved for Wells’ optimistic accounts of the evolutionary history of mankind and some of the fictional creations that carry this limited ideology (Baker, ‘Interview’). In fact, Golding clearly states that he holds Wells in high esteem and regards him as a great novelist, and that his rejection of Wells’ ideologies does not run in contradiction to his appreciation of Wells’ undeniable gift of imagination and his vivid depiction of life (Baker, ‘Interview’; in Biles, *Talk* 11). Wells’ influence as a novelist on Golding can indeed be detected in the projects that Golding had undertaken after *Lord of the Flies* which, despite not being published, still survive as manuscripts that exhibit Golding’s experimentation with merging two of his favourite genres together, Greek myth and science fiction (Carey, *Golding* 171-4). The manuscript of *In Search of My Father*, in particular, contains many elements that Golding eventually decided to pursue in the creation of *The Inheritors*, the most noticeable of which is the Wellsian

²⁹ It is worth noting, though, that Golding emphatically maintained that his father was not quite as ‘rigid’ as he made him seem and that his denial of God was based on a deep religious sensibility (Golding in Baker, ‘Interview’; in Biles, *Talk* 83).

propensity represented in the creation of a distinct breed in a manner that brings to mind the Morlocks of *The Time Machine* (1895) (Carey, *Golding* 171).³⁰ It is also worth noting that despite Wells' proclamations of progress, he still created disturbing futuristic accounts and a horrific testament to mankind's cruelty best exhibited in *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896) and *The Time Machine*. Golding had noticed, of course, how some of Wells' novels stand in stark contrast to the optimism expressed in *The Outline of History* and *The Science of Life* (1929), leading him to conclude that Wells was 'a divided person,' and that his conflict is understandable since contradictions are part of what defines human nature (Baker, 'Interview'). However, Golding did not offer a firm confirmation to harbouring a similar split upon being confronted with the question if his scientific education and his instinctual sense of religiousness had created a divide or a conflict of sorts (Carey, 'Talks' 171-2). Nevertheless, Carey reports that a trace of conflict can actually be detected in *The Inheritors*, particularly when compared to the original draft which Golding had first written with the intent to refute Wells' simplistic assertions of progress before he came to stress 'the evolutionary life force which drives the new people upwards "at a higher level of energy" than the Neanderthals possess' (Carey, *Golding* 182). The notes Golding wrote to plan his altered version support this notion since he seemed to have wanted to stress the evolutionary cause rather than blame the Neanderthal's plight solely on the Homo Sapiens' cruelty. This becomes distinctly manifested in the way Fa dies in the original version, which is by one of the new people's spears, as opposed to the later version where she is swept by the waterfall to her death. Carey concludes that:

[i]t is almost as if the first version of *The Inheritors* were written by the religious Golding, who mourns the destruction of innocence, and the revised version by his Wellsian, rationalist, scientific father Alec, who pitied the victims of evolution, like the dying rabbit he found ('Poor little beggar'), but believed firmly in evolution nonetheless (*Golding* 183).

Moreover, Carey notes that although Golding tended to describe himself as anti-scientific on more than one occasion, he still retained a scientific imagination, evident in the very structure

³⁰ One interesting occasion which shows Golding's respect for Wells as a novelist is when he was prompted to define what science fiction means after he stated that he did not think of *The Inheritors* and *Lord of the Flies* as science fiction. Golding chose the word 'irresponsibility' as one synonym for the genre since he believed that science fiction usually involved either 'ideas that don't actually matter' or 'people that don't matter' (Golding in Biles, *Talk* 3-5). He regarded Wells as an exception, however. In fact, he maintained that he could not find any 'post-Wells' science fiction that could address both ideas and people (3-5).

of his novels: in *The Inheritors* where he masterfully constructs the Neanderthals' intelligence and consciousness; in *The Spire* (1964), where he explores how a cathedral spire might have been built in medieval times (Carey, 'Talks' 183); and in *Lord of the Flies* where he experiments with the lives of a group of children on an isolated island and investigates the reputed goodness of human nature in the absence of civilization.

A similar divide can also be detected in *Free Fall* where Golding struggles with the split between the rational and the irrational and expresses his belief that the experience of living in two worlds, one being a coherent physical reality, the other being an incomprehensibly chaotic spiritual one, is what characterizes the human experience and is 'what living [feels] like' (Golding in Biles, *Talk* 79). Though Golding ends the novel on an ostensibly hopeless note where his protagonist Sammy Mountjoy attests to the reality of both worlds but fails to conceive of a bridge that could tie the two worlds together, Biles takes Golding's fixation on the issue as proof that he was still hoping to bring the rational and the spiritual together because it was Golding who stated that hope is what motivates the creation of a work of art (*Talk* 101). It makes sense to conclude then that Golding's treatment of the controversial issue of the inherent sinfulness of humanity is an effort at diagnosing the moral condition of the human race and possibly uncovering the factors responsible for triggering the fall from innocence in hopes of controlling the problem. Golding admits to Carey, however, that the task of defining and clarifying original sin is not an easy one ('Talks' 174). This might explain the inclusion of the rational and the religious in most of Golding's novels as crucial for highlighting such a difficulty in addition to demonstrating the partiality of both worldviews in accounting for the human condition. However, although Golding strictly emphasized the shortcomings of such systems when dealing with a problem so complex, the presence of the two worlds seems to have motivated the interpretative efforts to fall within the two strains with some leaning on one set of views over the other. In order to take on the task of defining original sin within the context of Golding's novels and evaluating the interpretations offered, it is important first to set a starting point from which the roots of evil can be unearthed and begin by the work that best exhibits Golding's views on the matter. Since *The Inheritors* is the one novel that offers the most elaborate account of the fall through its depiction of an evolutionary past and its analogy with that of the biblical times, it should prove to be the most helpful in shedding light on the roots of what is mistaken to be a present ailment.

The Evolutionary Fall and the Illusion of Progress

Most of the interpretations offered for what qualifies as original sin in *The Inheritors* acknowledge both the biblical and the evolutionary due to the overt symbolism of the fall and the ironic subversion of Wells' views.³¹ However, efforts that claim the novel as a religious allegory remain heavily dependent on the biblical tradition in explaining the nature of original sin and in explicating the factors that have supposedly led to the inevitable loss of innocence. As a result, man's defects had come to be localized in either his desire to gain knowledge, to obtain wisdom and be like God (Fitzgerald and Kayser), or in the experience of aggression itself as an instance of the corrupting knowledge that leads man to becoming aware of evil's presence in the world (Hynes 21; George 92-3; Kulkarni 5).³² Both of these readings entertain the assumption that the tragedy of the Neanderthals is a re-enactment of the fall of Adam and Eve, and that the phase of 'pre-knowledge' which precedes that of experience, rationality and awareness embodies a period of innocence (Kulkarni 71).³³ However, it seems implausible to blame the Neanderthals' plight simply on the desire to gain knowledge, even if it were to be located in their curiosity to learn more about the Homo Sapiens, because that would be failing to notice one of the distinct differences that sets the Neanderthals apart from the Homo Sapiens, and that is their lack of desire to be more than what they are. Furthermore, operating out of the possibility that the change the Neanderthals undergo following their encounter with humanity's ancestors could come to symbolize the biblical fall would be overlooking the fact that they never resort to the violent ways of the new people to defend themselves, even after being subjected to their cruelty. Moreover, following this simplistic association would be committing one of the fallacies that Golding warned of, and that is of equating ignorance with innocence or in effect offering a purely Wordsworthian idealisation of childhood and dismissing the fact that, for Golding, the roots of evil may be just as present in the child as they are in the adult (Carey, 'Talks' 174).

³¹ See Josipovici, 'Source'; Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor; S. Boyd; Baker, *Study*; and Carey, *Golding*.

³² In the book of Genesis 3:7, the desire to obtain the knowledge of good and evil is what led to the first sin and the disobedience to God: 'For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' However, Bufkin notes that this passage: 'she [Eve] took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband [Adam], who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened' entails that creatures who did not eat from the tree of knowledge were not able to attain the same experience and wisdom that Adam and Eve's descendants obtained and are, as a result, unwise and unaware of the presence of evil (Bufkin, 'Ironie Art'). This conclusion lends support to the notion of knowledge as experience within the context of the novel since it establishes the acquisition of it as a necessary condition for the loss of innocence.

³³ Critics who support reading the novel as an allegory find the new people to be standing for either the biblical tree of knowledge for their manifestation of the good and evil in the world (George 92-3), or the serpent who tempts the innocent people into the forbidden experience of evil (Green 68).

However, Golding is not just suggesting a kind of Augustinian idea of an innate evil, but also demonstrating how experience acts as a shaping force for it does result in some profound changes in the intellectual capacities of his Neanderthals and brings their consciousness closer to that of the Homo Sapiens (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 103-4). Lok, for example, develops some of the abilities that allow the new people the sinful control of nature such as the capacity to use 'like', form analogies, connect mental images and arrive at conclusions (Golding, *Inheritors* 194; Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 103-4). This makes Lok feel that he has 'discovered the power of the new people in him' that '[he] was one of them, [and that] there was nothing he could not do' (*Inheritors* 202). Still, unlike a child with a modern mind, Lok is unable to retain this kind of consciousness or even exercise the newly acquired capacities to their fullest. This helps highlight the difference between innocence and ignorance as well as suggest that there is something essentially different about the Neanderthals that keeps them from suffering the fall.³⁴ Experience, then, might only be influential in promoting the dark side of human nature if the inherent conditions that nurture it are present.

Attempts at examining the novel in analogy with Wells' *Outline of History* have reinforced the biblical notion that it is rationality that grants individuals the freedom to choose, turn away from God and fall. As a result, these critics have shifted the interpretive focus from that of knowledge to one of the proclaimed evolutionary virtues that have supposedly distinguished the human race from the animal world.³⁵ The novel, then, can be taken as a reflection of an endeavour at rewriting the evolutionary history of humanity in light of a newly confirmed perspective of their nature. Moreover, since Golding intended *The Inheritors* as a refutation of the association that Wells had drawn between progress and intelligence, it makes sense to define the evolutionary fall as a point in the phylogeny of man when his intellectual capacities evolve at the expense of his moral development. To highlight the resultant cruelty of the possession of intelligence, Golding creates the innocent Neanderthals as a species that live mainly through their senses and instincts rather than reason. This limitation not only deprives them of the capacity to connect mental images, form deductions and conceive of causal relations, but also endows them with a sense of automaticity that compromises their chances of breaking free from the mechanistic and

³⁴ Bufkin, Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor have actually stated that despite the changes the Neanderthals experience following their encounter with the Homo Sapiens, they remain unfallen (Bufkin, 'Ironic Art'; Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 105)

³⁵ See Josipovici, 'Source' 240; S. Boyd 27; Clements 76; Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 68.

instinctual responses to environmental cues. Though their pictures seem to demonstrate some degree of rationality, Golding emphasizes, especially in Lok's case, that these pictures are mostly elicited as direct reactions to some stimuli in their surroundings: 'There built up in Lok's head a picture of the man, not by reasoned deduction but because in every place the scent told him – do this!' (*Inheritors* 77). This actually creates a problem for the Neanderthals because the environment their instincts evolved to adapt to is no longer the same, presumably intended by Golding to be read as the reason why only a small band of them survives prior to being annihilated by the Homo Sapiens. Similarly, because they are denied causal reasoning as well as the perception of a complex stream of time, they are unable to achieve the freedom and the flexibility needed to create tools or alter the environment to serve their purposes. Lok, for instance, is incapable of sorting through his mental images, a task that other members of his band are able to tackle with a great deal of difficulty, and this usually puts him in a position where he desires Mal's capacity to '[join] a picture to a picture so that the last of many came out of the first' (96). It seems, however, that even the supposedly wise Mal is unable to address adequately the problems that the changing weather patterns have imposed on his people. As unfortunate as that may be, it is important to stress that the absence of most of what are now regarded as higher cognitive capacities suggests why the Neanderthals are unable to imagine and compare different states of being as well as visualize future scenarios. Consequently, it is not in their nature to be gripped by feelings of superiority, and as such, they do not experience lust for power or feel the need to subject others to their will and control. This perfectly shows in their belief that all life, including their own, came out of Oa's belly, a conception that forbids the killing of other creatures because the Neanderthals' lack of analogical reasoning skills, among others, have made it difficult for them to perceive one life as more important than another.

Putting this representation in contrast with the intelligent, arrogant, and selfish Homo Sapiens should not only highlight how the near absence of modern intelligence in the Neanderthals reinforces their state of innocence, but also reveal human intellect as the one faculty responsible for the externalization of the knowledge of evil and rationalizing its existence as emanating from some external entity that can either be appeased or annihilated. However, despite Golding's admission of the role of intelligence in facilitating the sinful control of nature, he does not firmly assert that the 'operation of intelligence upon knowledge' is all there is to the moral decay of mankind (Golding in Biles, *Talk* 109-10). After all, possessing any kind of knowledge, including that of evil, entails some level of awareness, a matter that should bring consciousness into focus as a 'biological asset' that has

not only contributed to the reputed progress of humanity (Kermode, *Puzzles* 206), but also promoted the development of the aggressive tendencies targetted by Golding in most of his creations. It is at this point, states Bufkin, that the anthropological and the biblical interpretations intersect in *The Inheritors*, for it is only after Adam and Eve gain the knowledge of good and evil that they become conscious of their differences, and it is only through the biological possession of consciousness that humans come to obtain this distinct sense of self-awareness that allows them to exploit others to further their own interests ('Ironical Art'). Consciousness's role in bringing out the worst in individuals and societies is explored in most, if not all, of Golding's novels. Still, it achieves its full complexity and exhibits its potentiality in nurturing the selfishness of modern man in *Pincher Martin* whose rationality's struggle to ward off the reality of his dying state is shown to be driven by his distinct sense of identity or what Golding chose to label as his dark centre. Golding might not have brought up the sinful possession of self-awareness as a trigger for the Homo Sapiens' cruelty in his discussion of *The Inheritors* with Biles.³⁶ There are moments, however, when he appears to be targeting it quite explicitly as being integrated with intelligence, and as such, being responsible for evil:

[W]ith our awareness of ourselves as individuals inescapably comes in this other thing, this destructive thing, the evil, if you like. It seems to me that this self-awareness, intelligence, with these come the defect of their virtue (Baker, 'Interview').

Golding notes on more than one occasion that he is not strictly Machiavellian in his views on human nature, and that he acknowledges the complexity presented in the fact that though societies restrict the vicious tendencies of man, they are, along with the moral systems they

³⁶ Golding's treatment of consciousness in *The Inheritors*, in particular, has almost always constituted a major focus of interest for critics of the novel, especially in relation to the Neanderthal's perception and how Golding masterfully renders it accessible through his brilliant manipulation of language (See S. Boyd 27; Baker, *Study* 23; Carey, *Golding* 180; Medcalf, 14; Babb, 43; George, 81; Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor, 71). However, it had not been given equal attention in *The Inheritors* as being a possible cause of the 'morally deceased' condition of mankind, nor had its relationship to experience and intelligence been fully explored within the evolutionary context of the fall. An exception would be Gabriel Josipovici's views on the problem in *The World and the Book* which was originally published in 1971. Despite his insightful comments on the role of self-awareness in promoting the violent side of human nature, however, he maintains that the Neanderthals in *The Inheritors* are without self-consciousness (253), an opinion that I disagree with and that will form the basis for my reading. Furthermore, I believe that re-examining the matter in light of recent studies in the field of evolutionary psychology and consciousness can prove illuminating. Another more recent treatment was given by James Clements in *Mysticism and the Mid-century Novel* (2012). His brief but brilliant account, though, does not get into detail on the role of the existential anxiety that is brought about by the complexity of self-awareness in creating the worldview that externalizes evil and sustains group living, but brings about the destruction of outsiders.

impose, a human invention whose efficiency is governed by the whims of whomsoever are the individuals driving the construction of that society (Golding in Biles, *Talk* 44; Baker, 'Interview'). Nevertheless, Golding emphatically states that even if individuals do not subscribe to a moral code, they still retain something akin to a moral instinct, evident in the guilt they experience when they hurt or use a fellow human being (Baker, 'Interview'). Most interpretations, of course, have been loyal to Golding's belief that any investigation into human nature should be more concerned with the question of evil because 'good can look after itself' (Golding in Webster 6). It is important to note, though, that given how our paradoxical state is an outcome of the biological possession of intelligence and self-awareness which makes morality as much of an inherent tendency as that of evil, the biological roots of morality remain crucial to disclosing the complex psychology of evil that can override the moral code just as easily as being subsumed by it.

Although Golding had clearly stated to Carey that he is 'convinced of original sin ... in the Augustinian way' ('Talks' 174), he seems to maintain a rationalistic perspective on the problem that shows in his recurring reference to humanity's ailments in the commonsensical terms of 'deficiencies,' 'flaws' or 'defects' (See Biles, Carey and Baker's interviews with Golding). A clear support for this notion can be found in an incident that Golding recounted to Baker about how his passing allusion to original sin on a television program had once angered one of the scientists present, and how that set him off on a path to offer a more accurate diagnosis of the human condition that does not involve the absurdity of religion. This scientist, whom Golding believed to have been Julian Huxley, stated that man is 'a creature who suffers from an innate inability to live a proper and satisfactory life in a social circumstance,' a statement that Golding did not conceive of as being contradictory to the notion of original sin, but as more of an 'elaborate definition' of the idea (Baker, 'Interview'). Despite Golding's belief in the biological roots of the problem, though, he still found the theory of evolution objectionable due to a set of flaws that he believed to have been an outcome of mankind's search for a favourable pattern to impose on the world rather than its readiness to admit to the reality of the human condition. One such instance of the self-deception that humanity allows itself in its history is that of the illusion of progress which had often been pointed out as being associated with the Victorian view of evolution that Golding found to be most pronounced in the writings and fictions of H.G. Wells. With progress comes the belief that the human present is an improvement on the past, and that the future holds a better promise for the human race. This explains why Golding breaks out of the stereotypical depictions of the pre-historic man as a cannibalistic savage and refuses to portray human

ancestry in a favourable light. What he does, instead, is show, as Baker has noted, that the process of evolution did not lead to any significant improvement in human nature (*Study* 19), an observation that clearly captures how Golding chose to view the biological operation that underlies the adaptations of life forms to their environment, and which he clearly articulated to Baker as being more about change than progress ('Interview'). Furthermore, Golding stated that it is better to refrain from using the word 'evolution' for it 'presumably implies progress in one direction or another' ('Interview').

Such an association can be said to be logical in light of the current confusion that surrounds Darwin's beliefs regarding the concept of progress, for he was found to be in support of the notion sometimes, but objecting to viewing evolution in such progressive terms on other occasions (Shanahan 176). An example of that is illustrated by Shanahan in two statements that were cited in two different sources as either lending support for the belief that Darwin was a progressionist, or as disproving the claim altogether. In his B notebook, Darwin is clearly of the opinion that the classification of the species as being high or low is a notion that should not be entertained: 'It is absurd to talk of one animal being higher than another. — We consider those, when the intellectual faculties [/] cerebral structure most developed, as highest. — A bee doubtless would when the instincts were' (qtd. in Shanahan 176).³⁷ However, in *The Origin of Species*, Darwin makes a statement that opposes the previous position: 'The inhabitants of each successive period in the world's history have beaten their predecessors in the race for life, and are, in so far, higher in the scale of nature' (345). This contradiction, according to Shanahan, had led some researchers to endorse the view that Darwin actually believed in evolution as progressive, but had to resort to downplaying his belief sometimes so as not to have his ideas rejected. Others, on the other hand, believed that Darwin had to express his evolutionary views in progressive terms to keep up with the age's cultural beliefs and to have his views accepted by the scientific community at the time (Shanahan 176-7).

Resolving the confusion surrounding Darwin's belief in progress, as interesting as it seems, is a matter that is beyond the scope of this thesis, but what is important to stress for now is that whether one wishes to side with the former position or the latter, the fact remains

³⁷ This anti-progressive view may be the one Golding adopts in his presentation of the Homo Sapiens as being superior to the Neanderthals in terms of their possession of the intellectual capacities that allow them higher adaptability to the environment, but inferior when it comes to the Neanderthals' instinctual capabilities and their unparalleled access to the rich world of the senses. Such a presentation, in other words, is not aimed at treating one species as superior to the other, but at delivering another take on the evolutionary history of mankind that does not contribute to the illusion of progress.

that Darwin did at a certain point express his theory of evolution in progressive terms. This could offer some perspective, too, on why certain prominent Victorian figures like Galton and Spencer had also come to read the proposed principle of natural selection as a mechanism that could ensure the perfection of the human race as well as explain ‘the moral and intellectual progress’ of the Victorian age (Pinker, *Blank Slate* 30). Furthermore, when Darwin formulated the theory of evolution in *The Origin of Species*, he pointed out the similarity between the mechanism of natural selection and the practice of animal breeding by which the breeder selectively encourages the persistence of advantageous traits rather than those that cause the animal weakness (87). This led proponents of the theory among both Darwin’s contemporaries and the generations that followed to use his observations in justifying certain ideologies pertaining to the legitimacy of colonization, the slave trade and the inferiority of women, instead of simply taking it as a theory that explains the evolution of adaptations in different organisms in response to the selective pressures of their environment (Pinker, *Blank Slate* 30).

It is at this point that the more impactful ramifications of the illusion of progress begin to reveal themselves. Herbert Spencer claimed to have inspired Social Darwinism with his proposition of the mechanism of natural selection in the terms of ‘survival of the fittest’, one which would ultimately lead to a pressure to refrain from charitable actions towards the ‘unfit’, for that would slow down the drive towards perfection and ensure the persistence of undesirable traits in the human race (Spencer 444-7). Soon afterwards, intellect, which Golding initially targeted in *The Inheritors*, and which was considered by Darwin to be a biological phenomenon just like any other heritable trait, was taken as a measure of the superiority of one race against another, and as such, as a fundamental criterion for applying the principles of animal breeding to humans (Grossman and Kaufman 10). The call to eugenics was championed by Darwin’s cousin, Francis Galton, who believed that the perfection of the human race might be brought about through discouraging the unfit from breeding so as to ensure the supremacy of good traits, the most important of which is intelligence, and the disappearance of bad ones (Galton 1-24; Grossman and Kaufman 11). Similarly, Paul Broca, a contemporary of Galton and renowned for his discovery of the localization of certain language functions in the brain, reinforced the false assumption of superiority that was granted to the white race as opposed to other races by establishing the fallacious association between intelligence and characteristics like race and skin colour (Grossman and Kaufman 11; Gould, *Mismeasure* 116). Broca also concluded—based on his examination of the skulls and brains of females and males—that gender differences in terms

of intelligence exist, and that males are more intellectually advanced than females (Grossman and Kauffman 11; Gould, *Mismeasure* 136). Another investigation into the prized possession of intelligence that carried the call to eugenics into the twentieth century can be seen in H.H. Goddard's inclusion of issues relating to class in his claim that those who are at the top of the social ladder are in their rightful place since he took their position as being indicative of their mental capacities as opposed to those who belong to the lower classes (Grossman and Kauffman 11; Zenderland 277). Goddard's call for the enforcement of exclusion and breeding control on the intellectually inferior also came to include the immigrants whom he perceived to be mentally deficient as well (Grossman and Kaufman 11; Gould, *Mismeasure* 197).³⁸

These examples show that scientific inquiries in the nineteenth and early twentieth century were sometimes tempted into anthropocentrism in their association of evolutionary progress with intelligence. Even more than this, they often harboured racist assumptions that ultimately led to the abandonment of any measure of objectivity and a tendency to succumb to beliefs in racial supremacy. This might suggest further reasons why Golding sought to deconstruct claims of progress by taking intelligence and the supposedly advanced cognitive capacities of modern man as potentially sinful possessions. It should be stressed, however, that some of the alleged scientific and objective pursuits of the past can be noted as having taken a racist turn before Darwin's theory of evolution came to be published and integrated into the scientific investigations of the age. Most of the pre-Darwinian attempts at explaining the lineage of distinct races, for example, account for the diversity of observable traits by tracing them to either the phenomenon of degeneration, or the equally dangerous assumption of speciation which could just as easily lead to claims of racial supremacy, given how it encourages targeting each race as a distinct species (Gould, *Mismeasure* 71). In fact, such arguments can be found in Charles White's *Account of the Regular Gradation in Man* (1799), Johann Friedrich Blumenbach's *On the Natural Variety of Mankind* (1775), and Samuel Stanhope Smith's *Essay on the Causes of Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human*

³⁸ Such matters might have been especially infuriating for Golding who was raised by socialist parents and who had also admitted to being something of a socialist himself (Carey, *Golding* 14, Golding in Biles, *Talk* 49). He also stated, upon being confronted with the question of why there are no female characters in *Lord of the Flies*, that 'women are foolish for pretending to be equal to men [and that] they are far superior and always have been' (See the audio version of *Lord of the Flies*). This view of superiority is reflected in *The Inheritors* where the women of the innocent species are seen to be occupying a status that is equal in importance to that of the males, if not more. It can also be found in Golding's short story 'Clonk Clonk' where women are depicted as wiser than men. Whether Golding meant to criticize the habit of objectifying women as one of the negative outcomes of owning complex intellectual capacities, is not clear, but my reading will show that such a conclusion is highly possible.

Species (1787) to list a few. This helps show the theories of evolution as having been possibly used to justify the ideologies of the age, including those of cultural, intellectual and moral progress, as well as the imperialistic assumptions rooted in the stereotypical depictions of the colonizers as civilized and the colonized as savages. In fact, an example of the negative outcomes of the ‘pseudo-science’ of the age can be seen in Ballantyne’s *The Coral Island*—published before *The Origin of Species*—whose author claimed to have objectively based his portrayal of the natives’ practices and rituals on facts, but whose treatment of the natives as cannibals shows that the work was mainly motivated by the imperialistic ethos of the age (Dutheil). Though the theory of evolution was taken to grant the supremacy of the white race biological roots, the physical evidence was ostensibly ushered with the discovery of the Piltdown man which De Paolo believes to be responsible for Wells’ depiction of the Neanderthals in *The Outline of History* and *The Grisly Folk* as primitive cannibals (46-7).³⁹

In 1911, Sussex, England, Charles Dawson announced the discovery of the remains of what soon came to be taken as the missing link between ape and man since the remains include what appears to be a simian-like jaw and a skull the same size as that of modern humans (43). This finding was regarded as controversial when it was first revealed, but it gradually began to receive wide acceptance and influence among the scientific community of the time that lasted for almost forty years before it was disclosed as a hoax in 1953 (44). It was then that fluorine and x-ray tests revealed that the bone fragments were actually those of a modern human’s skull and an orang-utan’s jaw, and that their ancient appearance was the result of being stained before they were planted at the digging site to be excavated (44-45). Before the hoax was revealed, however, a group of scientists believed that the bones belonged to one single relative, leading them to take the forged skull’s size as indicative of the possibility that the ancestors of modern humans evolved large brains as early as the Pleistocene period. This, in turn, led to the exclusion of the Neanderthal and the Java man from the human line of evolution and to the belief that the ancestry of Homo Sapiens was quite ‘distinct’ from that of the former two (Washburn; De Paolo 43-7). However, misleading researchers into forming the wrong conclusions about the evolution of the human race is not the only danger the hoax imposed. The discovery of Peking man in China, which had

³⁹ De Paolo stresses that Wells’ depiction of the Neanderthal in *The Outline of History* and *The Grisly Folk* was not the result of the misrepresentation of facts to preserve a certain ideology, but was actually the result of an effort to keep up with the common opinion of the scientific community of the time. De Paolo supports his finding by sighting *The Science of Life* (1929) and *A Story of the Stone Age* (1897), published before and after the discovery of the Piltdown man, as presenting a more accurate depiction of the Neanderthals that does not invoke the stereotypes of savagery and lack of intelligence (47-49).

followed that of the Piltdown remains, gave rise to serious racial implications despite the challenge the discovery posed to the authenticity of the Piltdown man (De Paolo 46). Peking man, which was taken to be the ancestor of the modern day Chinese, was found to be buried at about the same depth as that of the Piltdown remains, a factor that was considered to be indicative of their evolution at about the same time. However, since Peking's man's skull was noticeably smaller than that of the forged Piltdown skull, an observation that was considered to be indicative of a difference in intelligence, it followed that racial conclusions were formed about the white race being more advanced than the other races, and that 'whites crossed the threshold to full humanity long before other people' (Gould, *Panda's Thumb* 117; De Paolo 46-7). Furthermore, the discovery of the Piltdown man in England led to the assumption that the English were the 'progenitors of the white race' and that non-whites were the descendants of other distinct ancestries like Erectus, a matter which De Paolo believes to be responsible for the imperialistic undertone that Wells' *Grisly Folk* carries (De Paolo 46-7). De Paolo's observation supports that of McCarron, who states that one possible way of reading *The Inheritors* is through digging for issues of colonialism and subordinating them to beliefs in the evolutionary scale of nature. He writes that:

[i]f one is at the top of the evolutionary ladder, then one has no moral obligation to respect the rights, or even the lives, of those who have yet to reach this plateau. Instead, there is a moral duty to impose one's superior values on all those people who remain in a state of unenlightened savagery, and if they remain obdurate then it is permissible to kill them (*Golding* 10).

This connection should point to the possibility that the Piltdown issue could have contributed to shaping both Wells' and Golding's views on evolution since the Piltdown discovery is believed to have influenced Wells' representation of the Neanderthals in the *Outline of History* and *The Grisly Folk*, and its being exposed as a hoax in 1953 could have pressed Golding's attack on progress, intelligence and national pride in both *Lord of the Flies* in 1954 and *The Inheritors* in 1955. Golding subverts the nationalistic assumption of superiority that was exhibited in *The Coral Island* and later reinforced by the Piltdown hoax by showing the English boys as being inflicted with the same universal defects that the cannibals displayed in *The Coral Island*. The attack was then carried on in *The Inheritors* in which Golding shows that the anthropocentric perspective that sought to measure the progress of a species in terms of intelligence had turned a blind eye to the catastrophic consequences of owning it. One such consequence is the capacity for analogical reasoning

which allows for the establishment of the superiority of one organism or individual over another, and which is ironically responsible for the very same Victorian conclusions of progress and racial supremacy that resulted in the escalations of the Second World War. Moreover, the belief that the Piltdown hoax is responsible for Wells' treatment of prehistoric man can be said to have made the hoax partially and indirectly responsible for Golding's reaction to the notion of progress in both of his early novels since they were both written, as Golding admits, in response to the depiction that the Piltdown finding is said to have compelled Wells to construct.

Beliefs in the innate drive towards inevitable progress and the perfectibility of the species were eventually overshadowed by the modern evolutionary synthesis (Shanahan 220). However, although some scientists like Gould rejected defining evolution in progressive terms and described the phenomenon as being 'culturally embedded' (Gould 'Trends', Shanahan 174), others like Dawkins continued to carry the notion of evolutionary progress in their discussion of adaptations and biological processes (Shanahan 208). Still, even with modern assertions of evolution as progressive, the idea that not every concept and definition of progress captures the process of evolution accurately also persists as demonstrated by the rejection of the racist and narrow perspectives of the Victorian age as well as those of the early twentieth century (Shanahan 186). Such proclamations were actually made in the 1940s by the influential palaeontologist George Simpson, who regarded the Victorian interpretation of progress as being a fallacious assumption that was 'imposed' on what had been uncovered about the workings of evolutionary processes (Simpson 260-1; Shanahan 205). Simpson also notes that anthropocentric perspectives on evolution tend to consider progress in terms of one 'single standard' rather than admit to 'a multitude of possible points of reference' (242). As a result, they are unable to consider the possibility that evolution holds many different examples of progress rather than the one kind that is usually defined in terms of the human capacity to gain flexible adaptability through controlling and altering the environment in accordance with human needs (242). This shows that even when Simpson admitted to the fact that some sort of progress does indeed take place, he did not believe that it can be captured and defined objectively, evident in his view that 'progress is not an intrinsic quality, that exists independently of human thought' (242). However, in 1953, Julian Huxley sought to offer a more objective measure of progress through presenting a more general definition of the phenomenon as a biological 'improvement which permits or facilitates further improvement; or ... as a series of advances which do not stand in the way of further advances' (Huxley 86; Shanahan 202). This, in turn, led him to conclude that progress is an

unavoidable consequence of the mechanism of natural selection since it is, as Darwin stated, a process that ensures the production of biological improvements in response to the selective pressures of the environment (Darwin, *Origin* 97; Shanahan 202-3).

This shows that there were indeed scientists in the mid-twentieth century who strove to distance themselves from the imperialistic assumptions of the Victorian age by presenting alternative views that are more or less free of racial implications. However, the fact that notions of progress continued to persist, whether Golding had encountered them in Darwin's *Origin of Species* or found them in the writings of his contemporary Julian Huxley, might help explain why Golding continued to hold on to his antagonism to Darwin and his view of evolution. In an interview with Baker, Golding stated somewhat abrasively that the proposed mechanism of natural selection does not present a sufficient explanation for the complexity of a certain species or even provide a convincing argument as to how such a simple process can solely be credited for the diversity of traits. He also added that even though it 'seems to work,' which is probably the reason why it continues to persist, researchers are bound to stumble upon flaws and contradictions sooner or later. Moreover, Golding believed the resulting production of a not so small number of mutations to be more of a disadvantage to the species, and that he cannot conceive of a supposed adaptation that might be described as entirely advantageous. Though Golding notes that he cannot provide adequate support for his argument since his dismissal of Darwinian evolution is based on some sort of an 'instinct' (in Baker 'Interview'), current views in the field of evolutionary psychology are actually in support of Golding's position regarding the claimed efficiency of natural selection's engineering and the false assumption that evolution is driven towards the perfection of the species. Psychologists such as Pinker and Buss state that it is important to keep in mind that natural selection is not a guided process, but is best described as 'a blind watchmaker' whose creations are driven by the collective operation of the principles of efficiency,⁴⁰ economy and unpredictability rather than a drive towards perfection. Consequently, one cannot conclusively state that a certain mechanism evolved for the purpose of fulfilling a certain function because necessity is not a strict condition for the emergence of a particular trait. Furthermore, not every aspect witnessed is an adaptation in the rigid sense of the word since steady by-products of steady adaptations are highly probable. It is also important to stress that the mechanism does not operate in terms of the simple selection of the advantageous over the

⁴⁰ It was Richard Dawkins who called natural selection 'the blind watchmaker,' a phrase which Pinker alters to 'the blind programmer' in reference to the design of the mental functions of the brain (Pinker *Mind* 36).

disadvantageous. Natural selection is about costs and gains. If the gains outweigh the costs, the trait will be selected for regardless of the unfavourable consequences that may arise. This explains why certain traits, as Golding had observed, appear to assume more of a disadvantageous manifestation than an adaptive one. In fact, even if the mechanism turned out to be an adaptation, one should not be tempted to think of it as ‘optimally designed’ by natural selection because evolution is an economic process that has to work with what the organism already has (Metzinger, Ch. 2; Pinker, *Mind* 41; Duntley and Buss 117-8). Finally, it is crucial to keep in mind that there is no moral essence to the process of natural selection. If a behaviour or a trait increases the organism’s chances of survival and reproduction, it will be selected for regardless of its moral implications (Pinker, *Blank Slate* 61; Duntley and Buss 103). There are, of course, views that are in support of the biological roots of morality (see De Waal, *Good Natured*; Broom). It seems, however, that even those clearly postulate that the moral instinct, if one can call it this, is mainly selected for because of the important function it serves in promoting social cohesion and in contributing, as such, to the survival and reproductive interests of the group as a whole (Broom 22).

This final observation about the mechanism of natural selection being ‘value-free’ is perhaps the most important in the context of this research since it could provide an explanation as to the continued presence of a set of behavioural tendencies that are often regarded as wrong, unjust or immoral (Duntley and Buss 103). Based on this conclusion, evolutionary psychologists such as Buss and Duntley have come to consider the possibility that certain behaviours like cheating, stealing, soiling reputations, injuring another individual or even killing might have evolved as adaptations aimed at handling the conflicts resulting from competition over limited resources (Duntley 228-31; Duntley and Buss 107).⁴¹ And since these reputed adaptations involved the infliction of significant fitness costs on others, especially in cases of murder or homicide, they have turned the human race into one of the most aggressive forces in the history of evolution; humans then conform to a kind of Hobbesian picture of war of all against all, necessitating the emergence and the co-

⁴¹ Buss and Duntley note that killing is definitely not adaptive in all cases and circumstances and that it had evolved as a solution to specific situations in which pursuing it will not impose high costs on the killer (Duntley 232; Duntley and Buss 108). They also add that though this conclusion might seem outrageous since it grounds evil in human biology and might consequently be misunderstood to mean that people cannot be held accountable for their aggressive behaviour, it is worth mentioning that evolutionary psychology does not commit itself to the naturalistic fallacy, and as such does not consider these kind of acts as tolerable, or uncontrollable. Moreover, the moral code that condemns such acts is actually biologically rooted and shows clearly in the psychological and emotional states of ‘disgust, moralistic anger and contempt’ which are normally directed against aggressive and violent acts and which are believed to have been designed to motivate the imposition of a moral code (Duntley and Buss 119).

development of a set of defences that are aimed at guarding themselves against suffering the costs imposed by other members of their species (Duntley 224; Duntley and Buss 108). Fear, for example, is one of the psychological states that is often claimed to have evolved for the purpose of forcing individuals to avoid contact with certain threatening conditions and entities in their environment. Since recurring threats are claimed to have been biologically internalized as normal fear responses such as fear of snakes, and fear of heights, it makes sense to assume, based on the paleontological evidence of past human aggression, that humans have developed psychological mechanisms and fear responses against other humans, especially the ones who are perceived as different or unfamiliar (Duntley and Buss 109; Duntley 227). There are also other psychological states such as anxiety, stereotyping and ethnocentrism which have been classified, along with the capacity to interpret another individual's state of mind based on an understanding of one's own—known as theory of mind—as universal defences against the threats imposed by other humans. Such states, according to Duntley and Buss, may have played a significant role in turning the murderous behaviour into a difficult measure to employ (109). Moreover, they note that the human tendency to categorize and classify certain acts as either good or evil is highly likely to have emerged as an adaptation that would either deter individuals from pursuing behaviours or circumstances that could be harmful, or promote acts that contribute to the collective good of the group (111). This led them to conclude that the concept of evil could be defined in terms of the severity of the fitness costs inflicted on a certain individual or group; the bigger the costs, the greater the evil. However, other variables were also found to be influential when striving to classify the nature of some acts such as the genetic relatedness of the individual upon whom the foul act was carried to the one who is involved in evaluating it (104). To the victim's relatives, acts that involve severe fitness costs are usually considered evil as opposed to the other party for whom the infliction of such costs may seem necessary, or sometimes even moral. The best example to illustrate this tendency is the long human history of wars in which each nation believes itself to be engaged in the righteous defence of itself against the threats imposed by other nations or races (104). Moreover, Buss and Duntley note that given the subjectivity of the concept of evil, it could so easily become exploited to serve personal interests or political aims that are usually the leading cause behind wars since declaring a nation, a group, a race or even an individual as evil can serve as a motivation to have others join in the attack and reduce whatever expected damage the opposing party might inflict (115).

Given these observations on the morally indifferent process of natural selection and its

subsequent creation of an innately aggressive human nature, one can see the many ways by which evolutionary psychology's account of evil can help explicate the violent strain in Golding's fiction in general, and *The Inheritors* in particular. To begin with, it can show that the Neanderthals' tragic fate was more of a consequence of their naivety and their falling victim to the Homo Sapiens' psychological defence mechanisms and their fear responses rather than a result of pure cruelty on the Homo Sapiens' part. Golding actually grants his readers this perspective through Fa who makes the observation that 'the new people are frightened,' that 'they stand and move like people who are frightened,' and that 'they heave sweat and watch the forest over their backs' (*Inheritors* 206). Moreover, evolutionary psychology can offer a supporting claim for Golding's belief regarding humanity's tendency to externalize its inner evil since it postulates that it is human violence that had reputedly exerted the selective pressure that favoured the evolution of the cognitively biased defence mechanisms of ethnocentrism and stranger anxiety (Duntley and Buss 109). In addition, evolutionary psychology's claim regarding the subjectivity of evaluative systems and its resulting in adaptive yet immoral outcomes can prove rather helpful in reinforcing Carey's note about Golding's belief in the necessity of evolutionary change despite the costs it might incur on the moral state of mankind (Carey, *Golding* 183).

However, relying solely on this account in addressing the violent capacities of modern man may leave some crucial issues inadequately addressed. After all, it is important to understand the role of abstract thought, symbolism and analogical reasoning, all of which were emphasized by Golding as fostering the sinful in mankind, in contributing to the moral devolution of the human race. It is also important to address the role of self-awareness in promoting both the evil and the moral in human nature, considering how it was specifically signalled by Golding as another crucial cognitive function that has contributed to nurturing the narcissistic side of human nature and to reinforcing a sinful state of selfishness or self-centredness. Moreover, given Golding's depiction of the Neanderthals in a manner that reinforces their affinity with a highly instinctual animal existence, marked by a lesser degree of individuality and rationality, it might prove helpful to provide a workable definition of intelligence and to understand the kind of factors that took human cognition beyond that of the animal. One way of addressing all of these concerns is to widen the evolutionary investigation of evil and to incorporate the field of animal intelligence so as to highlight the difference between the Neanderthals and the Homo Sapiens as well as show how self-awareness or the lack of it can either encourage or discourage the severity of innate aggression.

The Evolution of Complex Intelligence, Self-Awareness and the Emergence of Evil

Imperfections in the design of natural selection and the possibility of its resulting in undesirable outcomes and maladaptive side effects for adaptations are best exhibited, in the context of this research, in the evolution of intelligence since Golding did imply that one of the issues he aimed to raise in *The Inheritors* is the connection between cognitive development and the emergence of evil (Golding in Biles, *Talk* 109-10). However, a connection of this sort cannot be easily established in an evolutionary frame before settling the controversy regarding the meaning of intelligence which stems out of the difficulty of setting a clear criterion for what can be passed as intelligent behaviour (Sternberg, *Criteria* 1-3). One problem with resolving the issue is what had been noted as a common tendency to give in to anthropocentrism and define both intelligence and its parameters in singularly human terms. Since anthropocentric standards could rule out animal instincts as intelligent behaviour due to their lack of sophistication compared to the human capacity for language, reason and planning, one can see how anthropocentrism could condemn animals to either being less intelligent or not intelligent at all (Godfrey-Smith 223; Budiansky xiii). For advocates of the continuity principle, however, which postulates that a simpler form or a precursor to any behaviour of a certain complexity can be detected in other life forms (Velmans 265; Bradshaw 67; de Waal, *Good Natured* 82), intelligence is not a unique human capacity because many of the cognitive skills that have long been regarded as uniquely human such as self-awareness, theory of mind and even reason have been noted to exist in a certain degree in animals as well (Flanagan and Hardcastle 207; Roth and Dicke). In fact, the principle of continuity which establishes the mental and emotional connection between man and animal was proposed by Charles Darwin in *The Descent of Man* where he explains that:

the difference in mind between man and the higher animals, great as it is, is certainly one of degree and not of kind. ... [and] that the senses and intuitions, the various emotions and faculties, such as love, memory, attention, curiosity, imitation, reason, etc., of which man boasts, may be found in an incipient or even sometimes in a well-developed condition, in the lower animals (101).

Taken in the context of *The Inheritors*, such observations might prove helpful in reinforcing the affinities shared between both species, particularly when it comes to empathy, than in highlighting their essential differences, an argument that will later be utilized in understanding the continuity of morality and possibly even evil. What should be noted for

now, however, is that given the large difference in degree between man and animal, evil can just as well be located in the complexity of intelligence rather than the mere possession of it. This conclusion, in fact, seems to be more in accordance with Golding's views since he did mention to Biles that he is not quite sure if the beginning of the 'operation of intelligence' was sinful, but that he is certain that it had gotten to a point where it definitely is (110). There are also other clues in both the interview and the novel that lend further support for this reading, but before venturing into that area, it is important to provide a definition for intelligence that will guide the interpretation of *The Inheritors* and the other two novels, as well as clarify what Golding had in mind when he blamed the moral condition of the human race on its intellectual capacities.

As discussed earlier, one difficulty in the study of intelligence is presenting a 'conventional definition' that captures it accurately (Sternberg, *Criteria* 2-3). Despite the varied range of definitions and perspectives proposed by both experts or laypersons, as Sternberg shows, however, there seems to be an agreement regarding the function of intelligence and its role in aiding different organisms in adjusting or adapting to their environment (2-3). Taking this factor into consideration should show modern man as far superior in terms of flexibility to any other mammal or primate in the animal kingdom (Bjorklund and Kipp 28), a view that is indeed reflected in *The Inheritors*, particularly in the Neanderthals' inability to keep up with the environmental fluctuations that are responsible for reducing their number to eight prior to their tragic death and annihilation. What makes this flexibility possible is humankind's ability to impose its will on the natural world through intelligence, an aspect that Golding communicates in the novel through his characterization of the Homo Sapiens as being able to shape and use objects and other life forms in the natural world to serve their purposes. It does not seem, however, that Golding was aiming at depicting these capacities in a favourable light, especially given how he was insistent with Biles on the tragic consequences that controlling the environment through intelligence could bring to the moral condition of mankind, and which he believed to be responsible for its state of alienation and guilt (109-11).⁴²

Given these observations, it seems sensible to begin by adopting Sternberg's view of intelligence as 'the mental activities necessary for adaptation to, as well as shaping and selection of, any environmental context' ('Concept'). This helps show that 'intelligence is not

⁴² The element of control over the environment and its being associated with intelligence had been considered by Julian Huxley in the 1940s as a criterion for measuring the progress of a certain species (Shanahan 200).

just reactive to the environment but also active in forming it,' and that '[it] offers people an opportunity to respond flexibly to challenging situations' ('Concept'). What this definition basically does is to provide two criteria for what qualifies as intelligent behaviour: one being the ability to respond to the environmental cues and modifying or engaging in a particular behaviour accordingly, and the other being the capacity to shape the environment based on the needs of the individual or the group. Employing the first criterion should bring to attention the fact that most living organisms are capable of detecting certain cues in their environment and of responding to them efficiently. Since instincts, as Godfrey-Smith maintains, 'can involve perception, and a good deal of processing and feedback to ensure the right match between behavior and circumstances' (224), it should be safe to assume that animals whose behaviour is mostly hardwired and instinctual do in fact possess intelligence. Consequently, examining *The Inheritors* through this perspective should establish the Neanderthals who are shown throughout the novel as being mostly dependent on their instincts and their powerful sense of smell as intelligent despite their inability to employ sophisticated forms of certain cognitive functions such as language or reason. In his discussion of *The Inheritors*, Golding states that the 'Neanderthal man knew as much as Homo Sapiens, in terms of knowing. He knew one flower from another, he knew one bird from another, he knew how to get in out of the rain, that there was a hole in the rock, and so on' (in Biles, *Talk* 110). This further demonstrates that both the Neanderthals and the Homo Sapiens are in possession of the instinctual form of cognition that Godfrey-Smith believes to be indicative of some level of intelligence (224). Golding, of course, classifies these capacities as knowledge rather than intelligence. However, his use of the word in this context appears to be aimed, like the second criterion, at marking the difference between the complex cognitive functions and the instinctual ones.

Having clarified what intelligence means within the context of Golding's fiction should leave one last question to tackle, and that is how the development of cognitive complexity encourages the emergence of evil. I have already shown that Buss and Duntley have taken the human tendency to engage in aggressive behaviour as having originally evolved as an adaptation to resolve conflicts in a social setting. They are also of the opinion that even the psychological defence mechanisms that were supposedly designed to protect humans beings from aggression can themselves be contributing to the very same problem they evolved to solve. Building on this argument, I will tackle the problem of evil in Golding's fiction in relation to the cognitive functions that Golding had specifically targeted in *The Inheritors* such as symbolic thought, memory and self-awareness, and show that even though they have

proven their adaptive value, they still retain some malignant aspects and maladaptive side effects that could be responsible for what Golding saw as the moral devolution of mankind.

Self-awareness, which should not be confused with consciousness, is a cognitive capacity that can be said to exist in both animals and humans alike (See Leary and Buttermore, Morin 'Levels').⁴³ What marks its distinct uniqueness in the human race, however, is its inextricable connection to other higher aspects of human cognition such as the capacity for symbolic thought, analogical reasoning and memory (Blackmore 126, Leary and Buttermore). One important function that self-awareness fulfils is that of facilitating acts of social interaction, cooperation and reciprocity since they are claimed to be dependent on constructing a sense of identity and on defining the boundaries between one individual and another in any given social setting (Leary and Buttermore). Self-awareness can also be regarded as crucial to the development of theory of mind which allows people to introspect and develop an understanding of themselves so as to comprehend, predict, and manipulate the behaviour and thoughts of those around within the contexts of both cooperation and competition (Leary and Buttermore, Morin, 'Self-awareness'). Moreover, given its connection to memory and temporal reasoning, self-awareness can grant the advantage of mental time travel, thereby allowing individuals to not only project themselves into the future and imagine possible outcomes, but also develop the capacity to recall past experiences and utilize them for learning as well as constructing a stronger sense of identity (Metzinger Ch. 3, Leary and Buttermore). This particular ability to predict future outcomes is noted by Leary and Buttermore to be tremendously crucial to empathy and morality since it grants individuals the capacity to imagine themselves in other people's circumstances and experience what it feels like to be them. It is also important in that it allows people to break free from the immediate cues and the 'automatic' responses to the current setting because it makes it possible to anticipate the outcome of certain actions and withhold from exercising them if they were to be perceived as harmful to either the self or other individuals (Leary and Buttermore). What further promotes the moral element in the human race is the ability to evaluate the self in relation to other individuals and to aspire to emulate altruistic behaviours that could better

⁴³ Given the capacity for attention, it is useful to make the distinction between consciousness and self-awareness in terms of directing attention outward, that is towards the surroundings or the environment in order to successfully navigate through the ecological setting, and inward which ultimately results in the creation of the self-model and developing a concept of self (Morin, 'Self-awareness'; Metzinger Ch. 3; Velmans 268). Based on this distinction, it makes sense to assume that animals do possess consciousness and since being able to respond to environmental cues requires the construction of a self-model, one could safely assume that animals are also in possession of some semblance of self-awareness (Morin, 'Self-awareness'; Metzinger Ch. 1; Velmans 268). This would classify consciousness and self-awareness as the sort of functions that exist in degrees which actually go against another common view that regards both as an all or nothing phenomenon.

serve the collective interest of the community to which one belongs (Morin, 'Self-awareness').

Unfortunately, however, the full experience of self-awareness is not all advantageous. For one thing, the aspects of self-awareness that are responsible for promoting the moral side of humanity can also be targeted as responsible for the same moral ills that Golding specifically targeted in his fiction. One such aspect is the distinct sense of identity which together with analogical reasoning could create the human desire to become a better person that upholds the moral code of the social group (Morin 'Self-awareness'). However, this process of self-evaluation can turn maladaptive since it could either result in the emergence of superiority or racial supremacy, or give rise to self-critical behaviour that can ultimately create the sense of inferiority and the desire to self-destruct or contemplate suicide (Morin 'Self-awareness'). In addition, engaging in analogies along with the capacity to perceive the self in a future setting can lead to greed, lust and envy since they make it possible to compare the self to others, to imagine possessing what they have and to possibly even end up seeking the means by which to feed the self's needs and desires (Josipovice, 'Source' 241). Moreover, possessing an extended self, an aspect that reinforces control over automatic impulses by allowing individuals to contemplate the ramifications of their actions, is usually targeted by terror management theorists as the leading cause behind the uniquely human experience of death anxiety since it allows the self to foresee its death, realize its inevitability and experience the terror of possible annihilation (Landau et al.). This existential concern is a specifically human one because man is the only animal who possesses the aspects of intelligence that can comprehend the problematic nature of death and fear its process and ramifications. In *The Denial of Death* (1973), Ernest Becker maintains that:

[m]an is literally split in two: he has an awareness of his own splendid uniqueness in that he sticks out of nature with a towering majesty, and yet he goes back into the ground a few feet in order blindly and dumbly to rot and disappear forever. It is a terrifying dilemma to be in and to have to live with. The lower animals are, of course, spared this painful contradiction, as they lack a symbolic identity and the self-consciousness that goes with it. ... [I]nside they are anonymous, and even their faces have no name. ... The knowledge of death is reflective and conceptual, and animals are spared it. They live and they disappear with the same thoughtlessness: a few minutes of fear, a few seconds of anguish, and it is over. But to live a whole

lifetime with the fate of death haunting one's dreams and even the most sun-filled days—that's something else (26-27).

The struggle with the eventual reality of death constitutes an existential dilemma because it conflicts with the biological propensity for 'continued life' that both humans and other animals share (Landau et al.). What makes the inevitability of death a major problem for humans, though, is not only their ability to predict, perceive and comprehend its reality, but also the fact that they alone are able to attain the full conscious experience of living as distinct individuals with a unique sense of identity (Landau et al.). To guard against this anxiety, humans are claimed to have relied on the construction of a cultural worldview that defines a common purpose to life, grants meaning to their existence and sets them apart from the animal world (Pyszczyński, Greenberg and Koole 18, 43). With that humans attain a sense of transcendence since upholding the cultural worldview can either grant them literal immortality represented in the belief in life after death, or the symbolic immortality that comes with being part of something greater, a bigger community, a belief system or a nation that will keep on living even if the individual departs this world (Landau et al.). Sustaining a cultural worldview and fulfilling its unique standards of value can also help in guarding against the potential anxiety of existence since it can grant the individual a sense of self-worth and boost his or her self-esteem (Landau et al.). However, the downside to these defence mechanisms is that they are fragile symbolic constructs that are based on abstract representations of reality, and as such, maintaining their effect in battling the potential terror of annihilation may demand a collective recognition of their validity (Landau et al.). This could help explain why humans throughout history were found to be mostly intolerant of those who do not maintain the community's belief system or those who subscribe to a different worldview, especially given how such acts can bring the authenticity of their own into question (Landau et al.). Consequently, it might be possible to classify the defence mechanisms that humans have constructed to manage the potential terror of annihilation as another reputed adaptation that can contribute to promoting the aggressive strain in human nature (Pyszczyński, Solomon and Greenberg 12).

One area that experimental existential psychologists are interested in pursuing is the terror management propensity that they believe underlies most human behaviours and which they seek to explain in accordance with evolutionary findings (Landau et al.) They posit that the process of natural selection has resulted in psychological adaptations such as fear and anxiety which have proven their adaptive value by steering individuals away from any source of harm

that might compromise their genetic fitness. Certain fears and anxieties such as stranger anxiety or fear of heights are believed to have evolved as solutions to specific problems that human ancestors were compelled to face repeatedly; however, death anxiety is different in the sense that it continually operates out of conscious awareness, even in the absence of immediate threats or dangers. It is also different in that it is not associated with one problem in particular, especially considering how death is an inevitable reality no matter what the circumstances. This led terror management theorists to conclude that problems such as death anxiety should not be classified as an adaptive psychological response, but should be targeted instead as an undesirable by-product of the advanced cognitive functions of the human race (Landau et al.). They also suggest that although cultural constructs, ideologies or patterns are likely to be the result of humans' utilizing the very same faculties responsible for the problem to solve it, such symbolic constructs cannot be regarded as fully functional adaptations as previously explained (Landau et al.).⁴⁴

The additional inclusion of experimental existentialism in explaining humanity's innate aggressive tendencies can help build on evolutionary psychology's account of evil and explicate the role of human intelligence and self-awareness in promoting the violent strain in the human race. In addition, existential views of aggression can help explain why Golding, as Baker reports, is sometimes perceived as an existential novelist, and why critics are sometimes tempted to read his creations in an existential frame. Baker, of course, does not seem to be fully supportive of such efforts given his view of them as too simplistic and constricting to be applied to works as complex and intricate as Golding's novels (*Study* xvi). Despite this opposition, however, there remains a strong possibility that Golding might have been affected by the wave of existentialism that happened to rise to prominence in the aftermath of the Second World War, especially in the 50s and 60s. It is also possible to cite the existential writings of Erich Fromm, who is renowned for authoring *Escape from Freedom* (1941), as having contributed to shaping Golding's fiction and his perception of the concepts of the fall and free will, given Golding's familiarity with the author and the manner by which he handled the problem of freedom (Carey, *Golding* 122). Consequently, examining humanity's ills in an existential frame will not necessarily undermine Golding's core premise.

⁴⁴ It is important to note, though, that a cultural worldview is only invoked as a defence mechanism when death reminders are not consciously perceived. Consequently, it is highly unlikely for an individual to resort to his or her cultural worldview when immediate threats to survival and reproductive success are clearly present (Landau et al.). Moreover, the fact that most cultures are based on beliefs that arouse this fear rather than suppress it should not be taken as contradictory to their role as anxiety buffers against the possible terror of annihilation because cultures did not solely evolve to address this one problem.

On the contrary, the inclusion of experimental existentialism can highlight the anxiety of existence as one of the basic drives behind human behaviour as well as show that the terror of annihilation is not solely unique to Christopher Martin's narcissistic self.

Seeking the source of human aggression through an evolutionary perspective would make both *The Inheritors* and *Lord of the Flies* seem like equally plausible stages from which to begin the investigation into the triggers of the violent tendencies of the human race since they are both meant to affirm the wicked side of the proclaimed evolutionary virtues against Wells' progressionist views. However, whereas *Lord of the Flies* is concerned with highlighting the roots of cruelty and tracing their development in the child, *The Inheritors* is surely aimed at digging deeper into the phylogenetic history of the species and providing an imagined evolutionary backdrop for the development of consciousness and intelligence, and their role in the creation of moral ideas of good and evil. Nick Furbank actually notes similarities between *The Inheritors* and Kipling's *Just So Stories* (1902), in that both seem to be concerned with how things came to be. Although he did not exactly specify what he was referring to, it seems logical to conclude in light of Golding's interests that *The Inheritors* could be taken as his account of the precursors of those states of evil and guilt which dominate most of his later fictions.⁴⁵ This would suggest the value of an intensive exploration of *The Inheritors* since it might be regarded as a foundational text in this light and laying grounds for those further explorations in the next two novels. As a result, it seems wise to disrupt the chronology of the oeuvre in order to trace the birth of the boys' beast to the moment of its earliest conception.

⁴⁵ I first came across this argument in Jack Biles's *Conversation with William Golding* (1970). He mentioned it to Golding and stated that he had asked Furbank what he meant by the statement. Furbank's reply was that both *The Inheritors* and Kipling's *Just So Stories* are centred on 'how things came to be made' (Biles, Talk 107). However, Biles couldn't quite remember if the statement refers to anything the Neanderthals created throughout the course of the novel. My conclusion is that *The Inheritors* could be taken as Golding's own evolutionary account of how and why language, intelligence, morality, and evil are born in a manner that brings to mind evolutionary psychology's tendency to reverse-engineer behaviour.

CHAPTER 2

The Inheritors and the Search for a Biological Morality

The belief in a supernatural source of evil is not necessary; men alone are quite capable of every wickedness.

Joseph Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*.⁴⁶

When *The Inheritors* was first published in 1955, it met with a largely positive critical reception that recognized its sheer brilliance and originality in representing a prehistoric mentality and worldview, and capturing the paradoxical nature of modern humankind. The critical acclaim it received, however, did not exceed that of its predecessor which had not only quickly earned a merited inclusion in the literary canon, but was the text most translated, and as such, most responsible for Golding's worldwide fame and renown. Still, despite not having measured up to its predecessor in terms of success, *The Inheritors* was deemed by Golding himself to be his best and most favourite creation, an opinion echoed in Monteith's view of it as, 'a more original, and more powerful [masterpiece] than *Lord of the Flies*' (qtd. in Carey, *Golding* 173, 177; Baker, 'Interview'). Other Critics such as Joseph Carroll, Ian Gregor and Mark Kinkead-Weekes also came to express a similar sentiment deeming *The Inheritors* as 'the most perfect' of Golding's novels and as a superb piece of Palaeolithic fiction with 'rare literary merit'.⁴⁷ What seems to have given *The Inheritors* such a status in the eyes of these critics and many others is the psychological adventurousness that sought to humanize Wells' negative portrayal of the Neanderthals as barbaric brutes by relying on the innocent and naive perception of one of their own in recounting the annihilation of his race. In fact, it was Golding's attempt at rendering the Neanderthal mind and consciousness accessible to modern readers that attracted the most attention from literary critics and linguists alike, considering the sheer genius by which the task was accomplished. This can most clearly be detected in Golding's careful and tact handling of language, or his choice of

⁴⁶ P. 149.

⁴⁷ See Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 118; Carroll, *Darwinism* 174; Carey, *Golding* 185; Ruddick 97-8.

diction and structure.⁴⁸

One particularly important engagement with such an aspect of the novel is that of Halliday who sought to roughly classify the language of the text into three categories. Two of these categories, language A and C, he associated with the distinct point of view of each species, and one of them, language B, he tended to consider as marking the transition from A to C (349). Language A, he maintained, is the medium most heavily relied on at the beginning of the novel and the one capturing the limited intelligence and linguistic capacities of Lok and the other Neanderthals. It is a language characterized by limited diction, represented most in the Neanderthals' use of simple words that are normally associated with natural objects such as 'stick' or 'log' to refer to the inventions or weapons of the new people like their arrows and boats. It is also characterized by the significant lack of transitive verbs, or the reliance, when transitive verbs are used, on the Neanderthals' body parts as subjects for these verbs. One crucial function of such a choice is to communicate the Neanderthals' lack of agency or their instinctual automaticity in responding to their environment as in those cases when Lok's senses take control and tell Lok what to do: 'Lok's ears told him they were hungry and his eyes assured him they were alone' (Halliday 349-50; *Inheritors* 119). There are also moments when inanimate objects act as subjects for transitive verbs such as 'welcomed' and 'watched,' or are paired with action verbs like 'grumbled' and 'blinked'. These tactics might have been intentionally resorted to in order to reflect the Neanderthals' anthropomorphic perspective of their natural surroundings or their inability to act or force their will on their world, particularly when it comes to the elements of fire and water over which they have little to no control. Some of these stylistic choices, though brilliant in the rendering of consciousness and point of view of the Neanderthals, constitute a major cause of the difficulty that many readers experience in grasping the events and occurrences of the novel which may initially be perceived as clouded in obscurity in spite of the simple linguistic constructs employed in their communication. In fact, it is the simplicity of the language and the modesty of its diction in particular that are responsible for the encountered challenge in reading the novel since they are again intentionally represented as too limited to capture the array of complex events that begin to unfold as the Neanderthals encounter the new people and their incomprehensible hostility. It should be stressed, however, that such challenges are instrumental in communicating the novel's main thematic concerns given how they aid in arousing readerly

⁴⁸ See Halliday; Hoover; S. Boyd 27; Baker, *Study* 23; Carey, *Golding* 180; Medcalf 14; Babb 43; George 81; Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 71.

empathy or the sharing of the frustration of Lok as he struggles to comprehend the complex other that has invaded the serenity of his home island and brought most of his tribesmen to their death. They are also instrumental in providing the only means of assessing the consciousness and intelligence of a species that is innocent of the knowledge of aggression forced upon it by modern humanity.

Choosing to refute the myth of evolutionary progress through creating a simple minded Neanderthal rather than an intelligent being is understandable given Golding's views on modern intelligence and its inextricable connection to humanity's destructive aggression. One cannot help but wonder, though, if Golding's rendition of the inner workings of a primitive mind had made any use of the scientific opinion of the age, considering Golding's opposition to scientific rationality and his view of its tendency to force favourable illusions on the world. There is also the important question of how much of Golding's depiction of the prehistoric mind is accurate in light of the more recent anthropological conceptions and theories concerning the Neanderthals' capacity to adopt the higher modes of cognitive functioning that are normally attributed to human beings as a species. Addressing such questions may not be directly related to the primary concern of this research which involves investigating how the moral instinct of both species operate in an evolutionary frame. The fact remains, however, that engaging in such matters can help locate the work in its historical context, explain how and why Golding endorsed or opposed some of the evolutionary views available at the time he wrote *The Inheritors*, as well as highlight the essential features responsible for asserting the work's status as a distinguished fictionalized Palaeolithic creation to this day.

It is well established that Golding initially created the work as an explicit rejection of the basic premise of H.G. Wells' *The Outline of History* and *The Grisly Folk*. Yet for some reason, Golding still chose to depict his Neanderthals in a manner that in many respects has close affinities with those Victorian assumptions responsible for reinforcing the misconceived association between evolution and progress. The physiology of Golding's Neanderthals, for example, is described as that of hairy reddish creatures who have ape-like features and who walk on all fours. This image is not far removed from the physiognomy Wells believed the Neanderthals to have possessed in *The Outline of History*. There is also the child-like mentality and the pictorial thinking of Golding's Neanderthals that can be said to have been inspired, too, by some of the possibly biased assumptions of the Victorian age regarding the Neanderthals' mind and mentality. Indeed, it is in Wells' *Short History of the World* that such an image emerges, evident in the view that '[p]rimitive man probably thought very much as a child thinks, that is to say, in a series of pictures' (Raine 107; Wells 60; Carey, *Golding* 179-

80). Golding's adoption of these elements, in spite of his avowed rejection of established stereotypes of the primitive mind, can be justified as a deliberate narrative strategy designed to seduce readers into building certain expectations so as to deliver the core premise of the book in a much more shocking and effective manner. By having a typical Wellsian characterization systematically following on from an epigraph which quotes Wells on the barbaric nature of Homo Neanderthals, Golding can direct readers into believing that his plot, too, will involve brutish, cannibalistic, uncivilized cavemen who get to be justifiably wiped out by the arrival of our intelligent ancestors. The representation may even be perceived as having been intentionally employed to feed the ego of modern readers, using a strategy of deliberately provoked confirmation bias that is then exposed, in order to forcefully bring readers to the realization of their egotistical folly and delusion. It is also possible to argue that it might have been Wells' vision of a child-like mentality that inspired Golding to rely on commonly held Rousseauian notions of childhood in creating the pre-fallen state of innocence that he associates with his primitive beings. Since children are commonly held as an icon of a past innocence uncorrupted by social ills, relying on a being that reminds readers of a child not only serves in better communicating their state of innocence, but also helps in bringing out the viciousness of modern humanity unmasked when this child being is savagely annihilated by none other than our own 'civilized' ancestors. Thus perceived, Golding's ostensibly 'simple style' engages complex multi-functional play of perspectives; but read carelessly, the text may be interpreted as dedicated to a similarly ideologically motivated construction as the previously held Victorian assumptions regarding the nature of prehistoric man. That this seems highly unlikely might be corroborated by bringing into consideration Golding's correspondence with Monteith regarding the authenticity of his depiction and his concern whether he should have an expert check the novel before its publication so that unintentional inaccuracies are avoided (Carey, *Golding* 178).

The anatomical features of Golding's Neanderthals might have been credited to Wells' construction of them in *The Outline of History*; however, depictions of Homo Neanderthals as apish archaic creatures was actually a Victorian notion that continued to enjoy full prominence up to the 1950s, in part due to the authoritative views of Marcellin Boule whose theories were found to have attained significant 'credibility' in 1955, the very same year *The Inheritors* was published (De Paolo 70; Drell).⁴⁹ In fact, the portrayal drawn by Boule of Neanderthal man in 1911 as a savage creature with a sloping posture, bent knees, 'protruding

⁴⁹ Boule's views were disproved in 1957 (De Paolo 70; Drell).

face' and 'large brow-ridge' was so influential that it became the standard image that pervaded most of the theories and fictional creations dedicated to representing prehistoric life, including those of H.G. Wells and the generations that followed (Drell). Moreover, Boule's conclusions regarding the cognitive deficiency of the Neanderthals are highly likely to have been the source of Golding's unique construction of their mentality in *The Inheritors* since it was Boule who stated, based on his research on cranial remains, that primitive minds must have been in possession of advanced sensory functions despite the cognitive limitation that compromised their capacity for abstract thought (De Paolo 65-6). After all, results of measuring intelligence through studying the shape and size of the cranium were considered to be credible back in the nineteenth and early twentieth century (See Gould, *Mismeasure*). Since it was believed that "higher" mental faculties 'were in the front of the brain while sensorimotor capacities were in the rear,' it seemed logical to conclude, based on the shape of the recovered skull fragments, that the Neanderthals must have possessed sophisticated sensory capabilities, yet were unable to measure up to modern intelligence (De Paolo 65-6).

The negative Victorian perception of the Neanderthals would have been abandoned earlier given the presence of number of opposing views, including those of Arthur Keith in 1911, which sought to replace the mainstream image by arguing in favour of a more humanized model of prehistoric man (Drell). However, the discovery of the forged Piltdown remains in 1912 which happened to follow Boule's misrepresentation not only granted more credence to the brutish caveman hypothesis, but also compelled those who initially opposed such stereotypical depictions to abandon their humanized Neanderthal in favour of what was perceived then as a more scientific reconstruction (Drell; De Paolo 43). In fact, Wells' *Story of the Stone Age* (1899), published before Boule's construction and the Piltdown findings were made public, shows the Neanderthals as capable and intelligent beings, a perspective which Wells later on replaces with the supposedly more credible uncivilized ogre of the renowned *Outline of History* and *The Grisly Folk* (De Paolo 47). Even Arthur Keith, who initially held the belief in 1911 that the Neanderthals must have been in possession of a semi-modern anatomy as well as the level of intelligence necessary for the creation of tools, came to reject his own findings in favour of the 'accurate' representation endorsed by Boule, and became one of the notable defenders of the authenticity of the Piltdown man discovery (Drell; De Paolo 43).⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Keith's advocacy of the mainstream image of the Neanderthals are expressed in *The Antiquity of Man* (1915). This should not be taken to mean, however, that sceptical claims have been totally eradicated by the hoax's

Attempts at re-humanizing the Neanderthals in the 1920s eventually began to overshadow the misconstrued implications of the Piltdown finding due to the subsequent paleontological discoveries of remains thought to be of a much earlier origin than that of the Neanderthals (De Paolo 48-9). This had reputedly made it easier to abandon claims of savagery because it brought the Neanderthals closer on the evolutionary scale to modern humans (Drell; De Paolo 47-9). By the 1950s, the Neanderthals were almost exorcised of their viciousness and brutality, and they were beginning to be viewed more as simple minded benign creatures who still maintained the bent posture and the hairy form that are typical of their apish figure. In fact, perceptions of the Neanderthals as furry creatures reflect the prominent beliefs of the decade regarding their mental capacities since formulating their image in such a light seemed to provide an answer to the question of how they survived the harsh weather conditions of Europe without granting them any shred of the intelligence needed to make clothes or create tools and items (Drell). This shows that paleontological and anthropological efforts in the early 1950s, though focused on humanizing the Victorian ape, still tended to view Neanderthal man as possessing an apish form (Drell); and it is precisely this view that Golding adopts in his unique depiction of the Neanderthals as ill-formed, simple minded, yet highly moral and compassionate creatures. Consequently, it should be safe to conclude that Golding's representation of Neanderthal man is consistent with the prominent views and research of the immediate post-war age. The conclusion can also be supported by the fact that Golding did state to Biles that he had done some considerable research prior to writing the novel, and that whatever discrepancies or inaccuracies found in his depiction are more likely to be thrown up as a result of the studies made after *The Inheritors* was published (Biles, *Talk* 106-7).

Surveying the common views and misconceptions regarding Neanderthal man suggests that both Wells and Golding drew on basically similar models since both maintained the image of Neanderthals as cognitively deficient beings with primitive archaic bodies and apish features. Similarly, both seem to be of the opinion that it is the Neanderthals' lack of intelligence that led to their extinction at the hands of Homo Sapiens since that was the prominent view in the 50s and 60s, and the one championed by Boule in the early twentieth century as an answer to why they went extinct (De Paolo 70-6; Drell). This scenario, however, carried different implications for each author. On the one hand, Wells chose to

appeal (See E. Ray Lankester in De Paolo 44). De Paolo points that Lankester had actually warned Wells in a letter in 1918 about the questionable authenticity of the Piltdown discovery (44).

depict the achievement of annihilation as heroic given his own age's preoccupation with imperialistic conquests and colonization. In fact, Drell states that claims of extinction were particularly appealing at the time of European colonization since they grounded the hope of 'displacing' the lesser races around the world the same way our superior ancestors replaced the primitive cannibalistic Neanderthals. Golding, on the other hand, not only handled the proposed scenario of annihilation as tragic, but also regarded the once virtuous capacity for higher intelligence as the real reason why we are the cruel species we are.⁵¹ It seems then, that even though the 'scientific' models utilized by Wells and Golding in their prehistoric accounts were similar in many ways, the drastic differences between the conceptualizations of each age regarding progress, evolution and human nature are highly likely to have been responsible for the large differences in perspective adopted by each author regarding human intelligence and the premise of perfectibility. This should provide sufficient insight into the historical context of the novel as well as explain the connection between Wells' stereotypical portrayal of the Neanderthal and the unique psychological account provided by Golding. However, one intriguing question remains unanswered. How much did Golding get right in light of the modern conceptions of Neanderthal man?

Because Golding's account is fundamentally a moral one, concerned with examining the sins of modern intelligence in an evolutionary frame, answering this question requires a thorough analysis of his construction and representation of the Neanderthal's cognition and consciousness, in other words, his depiction of the relation between psychology and morality. The question of the moral instincts will be examined in detail later, but for now, it is important to acknowledge that some of the choices Golding made in creating his Neanderthals' mental capacities are actually in accordance with present-day research. The limitation Golding's people suffer from in communicating through the linguistic medium, for example, seems to fall in line with some of the proposed theories in the 1990s regarding the Neanderthals' vocal anatomy and the possible limitation this could have imposed on their

⁵¹ Actually, prominent figures in the twentieth century were in support of the view that aggression is an instinct. Sigmund Freud, for example, classified mankind's aggressive tendencies in the 1930s as instinctual and considered them defence mechanisms aimed at protecting the self from predatory acts (59). In 1953, Raymond Dart presented his conclusion regarding the primitive remains that were uncovered at the time, and stated that they seemed to indicate the presence of savage and predatory behaviour. Contrary to stereotypical claims, though, Dart did not confine this instinct to earlier stages of evolution, but stated that predispositions to violence are shared by all descendants, including humans. The argument, of course, was carried into the 1960s, and most specifically in the works of Robert Ardery and Konrad Lorenz, who came to consider the connection between intelligence and aggression. Ardery's reflection on the issue, though, did not result in deeming intelligence as responsible for the aggressive tendencies of humanity (31).

capacity to articulate the range of sounds required by a fully-developed language.⁵² There are also claims which take the relatively large Neanderthal brain to be indicative of the degree of social complexity necessary for the development of ‘gossip’ language, but not a ‘full symbolic language’ (Aiello and Dunbar; Finlayson 128). This would make Golding’s people whose linguistic skills are so underdeveloped that they are incapable of metaphorical language an interesting fictional reflection of such claims. In fact, Golding’s Neanderthals are not even able to use the linguistic medium as their primary mode of communication, but have to rely on picture-sharing, signs, dances and gestures to get the message across. Moreover, the discovery of what was believed to be a Neanderthal’s burial ground in 1956 was associated with the possibility that they might have been able to form some perception of life after death, especially since some of these graves included tools that were mostly interpreted as items to be used by the buried individual in the afterlife (Drell; Schrenk and Muller 84; Leary and Buttermore). This finding with all its inconclusive implications was captured perfectly in Golding’s fictional representation of the ceremonial-like burial of the people’s leader, Mal, in which the Neanderthals are shown as placing meat and water in his grave despite their uncertainty of the possibility of life after death. The archaeological evidence for the burial practice was taken by Leary and Buttermore as proof that the Neanderthals were capable of some level of self-awareness, a conclusion which I believe falls in line with the limited consciousness that Golding has granted to his people. In fact, speculations over the Neanderthals’ limited self-awareness are mostly based on lack of evidence for solid traces of their capacities for artistic creations or a symbolic culture (Leary and Buttermore), additional aspects that Golding’s people were denied.

Such conformity, however, does not mean that Golding’s account was without its flaws. For one thing, historical claims concerning the Neanderthal’s archaic appearance and their utilization by Golding in the creation of his people did not hold for long after *The Inheritors* was published. In 1957, William Strauss and A. J. E. Cave discovered that the Neanderthal remains—those that Boule had examined to arrive at his primitive physiology theory—were actually distorted due to an arthritic condition (De Paolo 70; Schrenk and Muller 13). As a result, conclusions made based on these remains could not be established as the norm since they evidently could no longer be taken to provide an accurate representation of the Neanderthal species (De Paolo 70). Strauss and Cave’s work helped rectify the prevailing view held in the 1950s which established the Neanderthals as simple minded creatures caught

⁵² See Carroll, *Darwinism* 167; Stinger and Gamble in Finlayson 128.

in an apish body, and made it possible to consider a more humanizing view of them given what was considered then as a possibility of their being the closest stage of evolution to that of modern humanity (De Paolo 70; Drell). This should provide some background for Calvin Wells' 1966 criticism of Golding's portrayal which deems the ape-like physiology of Golding's Neanderthals to be 'completely inaccurate,' and considers the representation of their reliance on their powerful sense of smell (regarded as the lowest of the senses and located near the brain stem) to be associated with a much earlier stage of evolution (qtd. in Carey, *Golding* 178). Carroll also notes that the scavenging habits of Golding's primitives might have been consistent with the findings of the age (Carroll, *Darwinism* 177; Finlayson 56). Still, research based on the recovered weapons and remains of hunted game show that the Neanderthals were not only good hunters capable of initiating organized group hunting, but also omnivores heavily dependent on meat for nutrition (Schrenk and Muller 81). These findings are significant because they support the hypothesis that the Neanderthals were capable of a level of social development that can only be managed by a modern-like intelligence (Schrenk and Muller 57). The possible dependency on meat for a steady diet can also be considered additional evidence for a high degree of cognitive complexity given the fact that higher mental functions are relatively highly demanding in terms of calorie intake (Schrenk and Muller 56-7; Finlayson 57). In fact, it would be impossible to account for the Neanderthals' survival in the old harsh weather conditions of Europe through the unintelligent caveman hypothesis since dealing with such circumstances must have necessitated group living, organized hunting as well as the construction and the creation of tools and clothes, and the capacity to control and manage fire, all of which are skills that are congruent with recent archaeological findings.⁵³ It should be safe to assume then that Homo Neanderthals might not have been as mentally deficient as early researchers were led to believe, but are highly likely to have been almost modern in their mental capacities.⁵⁴ Furthermore, Leary and Buttermore take the archaeological evidence for Neanderthal tool use to be indicative of some degree of self-awareness and an ability to plan ahead to some extent, an observation that further reinforces the current conception of them as closer to Homo Sapiens than previously thought. It should be noted, however, that claims of modern-like intelligence were not only recently established. In 1968, Ashley Montague criticized the indecisive method of theorizing the level of intelligence based on the shape and size of the

⁵³ Leary and Buttermore; De Paolo 66-7; Schrenk and Muller 57.

⁵⁴ Carroll, *Darwinism* 177; Leary and Buttermore; Schrenk and Muller 57; Finlayson 205.

cranium, and proposed instead that the available anatomical evidence pointed to a level of intelligence that is almost on a par with that of modern humans (De Paolo 66). Judging by Biles' interview with William Golding, published in 1970, Golding seemed to have had some knowledge of the paleontological findings regarding the mental capacities of Neanderthal man that followed the publication of *The Inheritors*. In fact, he explicitly stated to Biles that he is aware of the evidence in support of the Neanderthal's capability to create tools, but he was no longer concerned that his portrayal of them had run to the opposite end and shown them as completely 'uninventive' (107-8). This should raise yet another important question. Should such discrepancies in fictionalized and historical accounts pose difficulties in reading prehistoric fictions through the scope of evolutionary or cognitive science? Or better yet, how are these inaccuracies going to be tackled if a biocultural reading is to be engaged?

The answer to the first question is of course 'no'. Representations based on beliefs that are no longer scientifically established should not be treated as an obstacle. On the contrary, they help in locating the work in the context of the age's scientific findings as well as show how the author's personal beliefs interact with the interpretations of the archaeological discoveries of the time in order to construct a fictional account that points to a moral or political or other kinds of internationalized readings and constructions. Moreover, fictional attempts at capturing the prehistoric realm are very often heavily dependent on the prominent scientific views of the age. And since both science and fiction can succumb to the influence of cultural and political ideologies, as in the case of Victorian pseudo-science and the effect it had on Wells' fiction, works of the genre can be used to measure the moral and indeed the 'intellectual climate' of the period that helped shape them (qtd. in De Paolo 143; Ruddick 33-4; Drell). They can also provide support for efforts directed at examining the historical development of science in addition to tracing the evolution of certain concepts pertaining to the biological and cultural underpinnings of human nature (De Paolo xxi). Furthermore, engaging in such pursuits and measuring the authenticity of prehistoric constructions can highlight the authors' basic premise, explain their faithfulness or lack of it to the available research, if acknowledged, or their manipulation of it as it serves the poetic logic and underlying themes of the work, as well as explain why exclusion of certain data necessarily supports other elements in their fictional creation (De Paolo xv-xvi).⁵⁵

⁵⁵ According to James Clements, some of the choices Golding made in creating the Neanderthals' mentality were made out of necessity. Language and self-awareness, for example, are among the functions associated with the capacity for abstract thought and the sinful control of nature, and as such, they should not have been granted to the Neanderthals because they are not the sort of features that would help distinguish a species as innocent. However, it would have been impossible for Golding to fictionally represent a being devoid of any trace of self-

The cumulatively progressive nature of scientific thought can mostly be considered responsible for inaccurate representations of prehistoric life. However, there is a possibility that inauthenticity might come about as a result of the author's ignorance or misinterpretation of the available research of the age. One should also not rule out the claim that whatever findings that were available to the author at the time might have been intentionally overlooked or distorted to serve a certain function. This, as I have shown, is not likely to be the case for Golding, but whether the misrepresentation is intentional or not, the resulting account should be handled or evaluated in the same manner as any other literary representation. Fictional works are, in the end, highly subjective creations that are more about communicating a personal perspective than depicting an objective reality. Consequently, critical efforts should not be solely dedicated to tackling the authenticity of the representation, but should be more focused, instead, on how the work reflects the author's effort at understanding the origins of humanity, or in Golding's case, the moral devolution of our species. As Carroll shows, the need for coherence and commonsensical order are cognitive needs that play a significant role in both the creation of a work of art and evaluating it as well (*Darwinism* 162). Fulfilling these standards do not necessarily demand factual accuracy since the final questions are about the degree of 'internal' or 'psychological coherence' of the created characters, as well as the level of coherence or logical correspondence between the represented characters and the imaginative environments they occupy (Carroll, *Darwinism* 163-4; Ruddick 25). The simple intelligence of Golding's Neanderthals might no longer be in line with modern paleontological conceptions; however, it is still in a logical accordance with the level of complexity that Golding has granted to their self-awareness, social structure, linguistic capabilities, empathic tendencies as well as their inability to comprehend the complicated behaviour of their invaders or to even adapt fast enough to the new demands of their ecological realm. To successfully be able to bring all these elements into a cohesive whole so that the emergent benign psychology might be contrasted with a more complex and aggressive one reflects Golding's profound understanding of human nature and the inner workings of the human mind. The effort also attests to the level of artistic flair and genius by which he tackled the subject matter of human aggression.

awareness and incapable of communicating through the common medium of language. The result, as Clements has shown, is a species who possess a less complex rendition of such capacities (79). As logical as this conclusion seems, I still maintain the belief that Golding is more likely to have aimed at locating the problem in the complexity of these cognitive functions rather than the simple possession of them, a matter that I have already addressed in the previous chapter.

These standards should provide some answers to the question of how the problem of inauthenticity is to be addressed when interpreting Palaeolithic fiction in an evolutionary frame. Although my interpretation of *The Inheritors* will draw, from time to time, on current conceptions of the Neanderthals as well as those of Golding, they will only serve a secondary function to my primary concern which is to show how Golding's fictional construction of the primitive mentality succeeds in communicating the basic premise of the novel concerning the disintegration of the certainty of evolutionary progress and the false assumption that it is the emergence of modern intelligence that allowed humanity to rise above the barbaric tendencies of earlier species. Contrary to past efforts at interpreting the novel, though, my account will not be concerned with uncovering the evil in human nature as much as it will be directed at tracing the moral instinct in both species and uncovering the psychological conditions and adaptations that might overpower it. In order to do that, it is important to show, as I have previously mentioned, how the cognitive functions that Golding deemed responsible for promoting the violent tendencies of the human race have developed in both the Neanderthals and Homo Sapiens, and to explain how their presence and level of complexity bolster the morality of one species and obstruct the other's.

The Moral Instinct and the Erosion of Empathy

The evolving conceptions of Neanderthal man from the Victorian age up to modern times reflect a persistent and strenuous effort to redraw and define the boundaries between man and animal in a manner that might preserve mankind's unique status as superior reasoning beings. In fact, most of these efforts, as previously shown, were motivated by the appealing ideology of progress more commonly associated with the scientific pursuits of the Victorian age. It seems, however, that even if the principle of cognitive continuity between man and animal is subscribed to, there remains the tendency to seek out certain propensities, define them as uniquely human and declare them as unattainable by the animal world (Drell). This is surely reflected in present day scientific pursuits as is evident in the ongoing controversies regarding the possible animal capacity for consciousness, theory of mind, reason, and most importantly, morality, which specifically seems like a biological impossibility given the dominant view of nature as 'red in tooth and claw' (Drell; Rosas). In fact, it is the dedicated attention to competition over limited resources for survival and reproductive success as one of the most basic principles underlying most innate inclinations that made it difficult to reconcile selfless

codes of conduct with the characteristic selfishness born out of the replication drive.⁵⁶ As a result, it became more logical, even for those who are more attuned to explaining human behaviour in biological terms, to regard morality as a construct that is firmly rooted in culture. It is also possible to trace this conception to the need to maintain morality's sacred status as a human creation, designed by high intelligence to help humanity rise above its animal instincts and baser urges (Broom 195; T. Huxley 204-5).⁵⁷ However, there are still those such as Hauser, de Waal and Broom who take the universality of moral actions and the presence of what can be considered as precursors to morality in our closest primate relatives to be indicative of not only an innate biological foundation, but also of a long history of development and evolution that is much older than previously thought (de Waal, *Good Natured* 2, 218).⁵⁸ This view of an innate drive towards moralistic acts might be perceived as contradictory to Golding's perception of human nature as innately evil, especially when considered in relation to *Lord of the Flies* where Golding explores mankind's inherent aggressive tendencies in the absence of the social sanctions that keep them in check. It seems, however, that even Golding was in favour of the concept of a moral instinct since he also expressed the belief that:

man is ... by nature a moral creature, and when he's in free fall he, so to speak, stumbles over his morals without knowing they are there. He exploits people and then finds that with this comes guilt and that you can't be free of right and wrong because you know by some kind of instinct when you've exploited somebody, when you've hurt somebody, when you've cheated somebody. You know when you lie and all the rest of it. It's no good saying none of these things matter. They do. They

⁵⁶ See Dawkins, Nagel, Williams and Alexander in Broom 195; Sober and Wilson, *Unto Others* 5-6; T. Huxley 204-5.

⁵⁷ There are other reasons, of course, for why denial of a biological morality seems more appealing. Jesse Prinz has cited Herbert Spencer's Social Darwinism as a possible effort at defining moral values in terms of nature and as another possible reason why there had been so much objection to viewing morality as a biological possession moulded by natural selection (246). Spencer believes that the reason why there are moral ills is that people are mostly designed to live in an environment that requires them to be aggressive. This would make morality an evolved mechanism aimed at helping human beings adapt to civilization (Prinz 247). Since the process of evolution is progressive, such ills are bound to disappear sooner or later, but in order to ensure and hasten moral progress, natural selection must be aided. One way of doing that, according to Spencer, is to help natural selection by refraining from any charitable actions towards the unfit since that would slow down the process of eliminating imperfections (246).

⁵⁸ It is worth noting, however, that opinions have diverged over how much of morality is biological and how much of it is cultural. Prinz, for instance, believes that we are biologically predisposed to developing certain values, but rejects the concept of an innate morality (245). Hauser, on the other hand, seems to adopt the view that morality is mostly biological. His conclusion, though, should not be taken to entail genetic determinism because Hauser clearly rejects such rigidity. What he proposes, instead, is that we are equipped with a universal moral grammar from which we derive our moral laws and that such an innate propensity is responsible for the universality of certain codes of conducts in different races and different parts of the world (viii).

matter intensely to man because he is not just man, he is a social being (Baker, 'Interview').

The association that Golding draws between morality and the social nature of man is crucial because the origin of mankind's moral sentiments had been noted to lie, as Darwin had observed, in the evolution of the social instinct and the sensitivity it installs in individuals to the needs of others (*Descent* 68). This would make social inclinations quite influential in directing some behavioural tendencies towards more empathic and altruistic ends despite the claimed selfishness inherent in the interests that nurtured the evolution of sociality in the first place. Being a part of a social group, after all, can not only compel individuals to develop an emotional attachment to others and to learn to lend a helping hand whenever it is needed, but also prove rather crucial in conditioning individuals to make the effort to restrain their selfish acts for the collective good of the group (Darwin, *Descent* 79; de Waal, *Empathy* Ch. 1). It is important to note, though, that the development of the human level of sociality is inextricably associated with the emergence of the higher cognitive functions that have long been claimed as uniquely human or as having evolved to an unprecedented extent in the human race. It is this that seems to validate the crediting of human intelligence for mankind's unique possession of a sophisticated moral code just as it had been condemned for the emergence of humanity's aggressive tendencies. In *The Descent of Man*, Darwin maintains that 'any animal whatever, endowed with well-marked social instincts, the parental and filial affections being here included, would inevitably acquire a moral sense or conscience, as soon as its intellectual powers had become as well, or nearly as well developed, as in man' (68). One such intellectual ability is the capacity for a full-fledged language given the role it plays in codifying the ethical responsibilities and the moral principles of right and wrong in addition to the advantage it grants to groups in keeping track of cheaters and moral transgressors in situations of social exchange (Bohem). This would also mark memory as equally important to morality and to navigating the social realm since success of acts of reciprocity in both the human and the animal world, especially the ones that involve a risky expense to the actor due to the delayed repayment of favours, necessitates the ability to remember who would be reliable in contexts of collaborations and social exchange, and who would not (Axelrod and Hamilton). In addition, the complexity of memory in modern intelligence and its association with other advanced cognitive functions like analogical reasoning, self-awareness and theory of mind have made it possible for mankind to develop the distinct capacity for guilt and moral conscience since they allow the individual to ponder and evaluate past behaviour, to

understand how it had affected others and to measure the self against a held ideal (Kagan; Gilbert). Most of these functions, of course, are integrated within a concept of a distinct individual self which is fundamental to sociality because handling social ties requires the capacity to recognize others as unique individuals with their own sense of being. A distinct conception of the self is also crucial because dealing with the complexity of social interactions requires developing what is often referred to as cognitive empathy or the ability to interpret people's beliefs and intentions based on an understanding of one's own. Cognitive empathy, otherwise known as theory of mind, is of course, another fundamental component to morality since it makes it possible to assign moral responsibility by evaluating the intentions of conspecifics and deciding whether a harmful act should be handled as an accident or a moral transgression (Blair and Blair 147). There is also emotional empathy which, together with cognitive empathy, can help individuals recognize emotional distress in conspecifics and develop an appropriate emotional response to the victim's suffering (143).

All of these components help illustrate how the complexity of higher cognitive functions has maximised the moral capacity in mankind and made the development of their unique moral sense possible. As a result, it might be logical to conclude that Darwin might have been right in holding high intelligence as one of the necessary conditions for the emergence of a moral conscience. It should be noted, however, that although this argument might initially seem to deny animals the capacity for moral development, it does not negate the fact that most of the cognitive functions that support sociality such as self-awareness, memory and empathy have been noted to exist in a certain degree in social animals as well (See de Waal, *Good Natured*). This means that while animals might not be moral in the human sense, their possession of some of the cognitive functions that are crucial to morality in addition to their capacity for prosocial behaviour should at least be regarded as a reflection of an earlier and more basic stage of moral development (212).

Taken in the context of *The Inheritors*, one might see how this applies to the Neanderthals, or 'Homo moralis' as Golding chose to call them, since they seem to maintain an empathic, peace-loving, harmless community despite the difficult conditions under which they are forced to live (Baker, 'Interview'). They are first introduced to us as a small band of simple-minded naive beings who are not even able to devise a simple solution to a problem as basic as crossing the river, an activity that seems to have been undertaken repeatedly over the years. Their new dilemma stems from the fact that the log which they had previously relied on in crossing the river is no longer there, introducing with its disappearance a level of novelty that they are initially represented as unable to comprehend, address and tackle. It is

from here that readers get their first clue into the kind of intelligence the Neanderthals possess, and the fact that it does not provide them with any semblance of control over their environment. They are unable to build their own shelter which is why they have to put themselves through the danger of migrating between the forest and the sea in search of the protection of the cave and the overhang which nature has provided. The tools they use are all natural objects that have not even been altered or tailored to suit their needs: a thorn bush for self-defence, 'a splinter of stone' for a knife and a boulder for a hammer (*Inheritors* 53). They use fire for cooking and warmth, but since they cannot start one on their own, they have to be extremely careful in nourishing and maintaining the flame they had secured from natural causes (30). They also seem to struggle with the difficulty of locating and obtaining food, a problem which they normally tackle through scavenging for dead animals and putting themselves through the danger of being hunted and eaten themselves, especially since they cannot fashion the weapons that could aid them in defending themselves. The Neanderthals cannot even bring themselves to kill other beings, even when they suffer hunger, considering their lack of capacity, perhaps even desire, to control an environment that is represented as changing too fast for their simple intelligence to cope with. This clearly shows in their perception of a time when 'it was summer all year round and the flowers and fruit hung on the same branch,' a conception which they sometimes find themselves compelled to mourn due to their current hardships and their leading a life full of new danger, risk and difficulties (35).

Despite all these complications, however, the Neanderthals do not appear to be psychologically or emotionally exercised about their limitations, nor do they show any signs of aggression, discord or conflict, even when the resources available for nourishment are limited and hard to secure. This can be seen in their lack of a sense of possession and their dedication to sharing everything they have, out of genuine concern and affection for one another, whether it is their limited resources of food, or sometimes even their own bodies. Their sex life, in particular, may initially be considered immoral when regarded in light of our terms since neither Lok nor Ha appears to have been faithful to one particular spouse at all times (32, 95). It is important to remember, though, that their sexuality is not merely an extension of the animal in their nature, but also an expression of the unique oneness and lack of individuality in a group existence where one is willing to give his or her all to others (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 76). This is clearly manifested in the manner in which they take care of their elder and father figure Mal, who becomes so sick at a certain point that he is no longer able to feed himself without the help of his kin and spouse (*Inheritors* 87).

Although they express doubt of his capacity and wisdom as a leader and can only conclude that he is 'sick in his head' (46), especially when he orders a child to join them in the hunt, they do not openly question his authority or rebel against him. What they experience instead is an overwhelming concern for his wellbeing and an anxiety over his prophesized death which compels them to ask Fa to make an offering on his behalf to their goddess Oa, and to huddle around him in hopes that the warmth of their bodies might help ease his suffering and avert his imminent death (70). Furthermore, the Neanderthals' dedication to their group members is indiscriminate and is revealed in their willingness to put themselves at risk rather than abandon a fellow member in need. This shows in the instance when Lok and Fa take the dangerous task of scavenging for meat to feed the sick Mal and the others, or when Fa gives her life to rescue the kidnapped Liku and the new one from the hostile capture of the new people despite the fact that they are not her own children.

Such a level of social cohesion and the lack of discord in the Neanderthals' community does not seem to be resulting out of the enforcement of a complex system of laws and sanctions since the limited intelligence of the Neanderthals had left them lacking a sophisticated moral code to regulate their in-group relations. They do, of course, possess this one social law relating to their obedience to their father figure Mal as the patriarch of the group whose word, once spoken, must be obeyed (37), but they are unable to meet the cognitive demands of guilt and conscience since these require advance processing of memory that their intelligence is unable to perform. Though they are seen as capable of recollecting past events to a certain extent, as is evident in Mal's ability to recall using a dead tree to replace the log that has gone missing, they are unable to rationalize or reflect upon these events in any way that might aid them in building upon their experiences or developing a moral sense. This might explain why Lok and Fa are not tormented by the act of gutting and slashing the doe for long after the deed is done despite its having been a major source of anguish, evident in their desperate attempts to rationalize and justify their actions while the deed is still being carried out (56). They would say that it has to be done because '[there] is little food and there are not yet berries nor fruit nor honey nor almost anything to eat,' and that they need meat 'for Mal who is sick' despite their not liking the taste of it (56). Their actions, of course, are not done in violation of the one rule regulating their ties to the natural world, and which forbids them from taking the life of another animal unless it had died of natural causes. Nevertheless, their inclusion of such an exception demonstrates that they have some understanding of intentionality and moral responsibility that makes the task of gutting a dead animal emotionally taxing. In fact, Lok's belief that 'there is no blame' if a 'cat has

killed [an animal] and sucked its blood' shows that the Neanderthals are willing to appease their craving for 'sweet wicked meat,' which they later on profess to not liking out of moral anguish, if some other agent absolves them of the moral responsibility that comes with the intentional act of taking a life (37, 24). It is important to note, however, that although the Neanderthals seem to possess the capacity to set a simple system of laws in accordance with their understanding of the natural world and their own sense of moral responsibility, there does not seem to be any component in their rudimentary moral code that has to do with the enforcement of these laws or the punishment of those who might break them. This would classify most of their selfless actions, especially the ones that are directed towards other members of their group, as more altruistic or empathic than moral since they come naturally to them without their ever feeling the need to codify their selfless behaviour in terms of a moral system.

One could say that Golding intends us to see that the harsh environmental conditions and changing ecological patterns have contributed to bringing them closer as a group and developing their emotional attachment to one another. Their survival, after all, is dependent on their being a part of a community in which they work together to secure the basic necessities of life, provide food, collect wood and take care of their own sick and needy. When it comes to the Homo Sapiens, however, who are seen as living under what they perceive as life-threatening conditions, and are struggling with hunger just as much as the Neanderthals if not more (143), their society does not appear to be as cohesive as that of the less intelligent species despite their possession of the intellectual capacity for a sophisticated moral code. Moreover, the Neanderthals' selfless behaviour and their lack of desire to do anyone any harm does not seem to be confined to their own community, but can actually be seen to be extending to include other beings in their natural setting. Such a tendency can most clearly be detected, as previously shown, in their inability to bring themselves to take the life of another animal, even if it meant that they would continue to struggle with their hunger for meat. This shows that to them, the lives of other animals are just as important as their own, a belief that is translated in Lok's perception of their actions towards the dead doe as 'very bad' because the same goddess who had given birth to them had also 'brought the doe out of her belly,' making their actions a transgression against a being whose existence is as valuable in the natural world of Oa as their own (54). Lok and Fa's emotional turmoil, to put it simply, is not solely the result of a violation of what they consider to be the natural order of things, but is more the result of a strong sense of identification that they have established with all life forms, and which makes hurting any other being tantamount to hurting one of their own. This

makes their benign attitude less of a consequence of their capacity to comply with their simple religious perception which dictates that all life, including their own, has been created by a mother goddess, and more of an outcome of a strong affinity with the natural world made possible by their unique sense of empathy.

The capacity for empathy, as already shown, is one of the crucial components to group living in all social animals as well as one of the core functions that encourage the development of ethical behaviour or the precursors to morality in animals and humans alike. However, the use of the term empathy may cause some confusion given the wide range of cognitive functions that can be classified as empathic in one way or another. Mimicry or imitation, for example, which can be quite involuntary and automatic involves adopting the posture of other individuals and is sometimes labelled as motor empathy.⁵⁹ There is also cognitive empathy, or theory of mind, as well as the more common emotional empathy, which is associated with experiencing the affective and emotional states of other individuals.⁶⁰ Given the sociality of the Neanderthals, their sense of physical unity as well as their evident affection for one another, it is possible to deem the people as capable of engaging in cognitive, emotional and motor empathy in a manner that is similar to a large extent to the more intellectually advanced modern Homo Sapiens. It should be noted, however, that although this helps in bringing Golding's Neanderthals closer to their intellectual superiors, the expression of empathy for both species within the context of the novel cannot be simplistically tackled in the same manner. For one thing, the Neanderthals' sense of empathy seems to be operating indiscriminately due to an underdeveloped awareness which in the absence of an advance form of other cognitive functions such as temporal and analogical reasoning have resulted in a definite lack of what Golding calls an 'acute sense of identity' (Baker, 'Interview'). As a result, they cannot quite perceive strict boundaries between themselves and others, and as such, other creatures are not conceived as lesser

⁵⁹ See Batson 4-5; Blair and Blair 139; Hatfield et al. 20.

⁶⁰ Batson lists eight common definitions or uses for the term empathy, but I found that most of the included definitions involve the use of these three categories or sub functions in one way or another (4-8). Moreover, some researchers such as de Waal are careful to point out when tackling the concept of empathy that it should not be confused with sympathy since the former generally involves recognizing and comprehending somebody else's emotional and mental states, whereas the latter entails concern for other people's welfare (*Good Natured* 41; *Empathy* Ch. 3). However, the two notions sometimes seem to be used interchangeably as two interconnected components for moralistic tendencies with recognition being instrumental to eliciting the emotional concern that can motivate a person to act in a manner that would relieve the suffering of others or ensure their wellbeing (See Lauren Wispé in de Waal, *Empathy* 61; Baron-Cohen 16). This can be reflected in Simon Baron-Cohen's position, for instance, which classifies what de Waal has regarded as empathy and sympathy as two basic stages to most empathic responses, a position which seems less confusing and more practical for the purpose of examining the association between morality and aggression in the context of *The Inheritors* (16). See Blair and Blair 143; Batson 18; de Waal, *Good Natured* 41.

beings or even perceived as distinct breeds, but are rather regarded as extensions of their own selves. This can clearly be reflected in their tendency to refer to snails as ‘snail people’ and to their invaders as ‘new people’ despite their outward hostility and aggression (*Inheritors* 63). It can also be reflected in their inability to grasp the violent nature of their invaders because it is the people’s benign nature and their evident lack of the capacity for any aggressive behaviour that provide the model upon which they base their understanding of the natural world and the inner workings of the beings who occupy it. In fact, when it comes to the Neanderthals’ in-group relations, they are normally seen as compelled most of the time by their lack of a distinct sense of identity and their powerful sense of empathy to involuntarily mirror and live whatever experiences other members of their group are going through. This clearly shows in their inability to consciously remind themselves that the difficulty Mal is experiencing in walking should not affect them, too, yet as they continue ‘to pay attention to his weakness,’ they begin to helplessly and unconsciously mirror his affliction:

Mal lifted his legs like a man pulling them out of mud and his feet were no longer clever. They chose places of their own unskilfully, but as though something were pulling them sideways so that he reeled on his stick. The people behind him followed each of his actions easily out of the fullness of their health. Focused on his struggle they became an affectionate and unconscious parody. As he leaned and reached for his breath they gaped too, they reeled, their feet were deliberately unclever (23).

This kind of unconscious imitation highlights their possession of a much more primitive capacity to experience other people’s emotional states known as emotional contagion which, unlike empathy, entails an emotional convergence of sorts whereby an individual is unable to differentiate between his or her emotional experiences and those of others (Hatfield, Rapson, and Le 19-20). Emotional contagion is also commonly observed in newborns who are yet to attain a sense of individuality, an aspect shared by the Neanderthals as previously shown, since their self-awareness is very much like that of a child in its early stages of development where it is easy for the boundaries that divide the self from others to get blurred and for the self to get lost in the mass of surrounding emotions, fears and identities (See de Waal, *Good Natured* 80). This lack of a sense of individuality is made worse by the fact that the people do not possess the advanced processing of memory necessary for the formation of a personal past that can contribute to clearly defining who they are and to consequently establishing the individual differences setting them apart from one another. In fact, it does not even seem that the Neanderthals are capable of breaking out of their fixation on the here and now, of

properly evaluating, reflecting on and connecting their memories and recollections to their present selves, or of imagining themselves beyond the immediate future. This limited capacity for an extended self perfectly shows in the old woman's reaction to Lok's helpless attempt at assuming the leadership role following Mal and Has' death wherein she questions his decision of prioritizing hunting for food when there seems to be no immediate need for more:

The old woman waited pitilessly. There was still food piled in the recess, *though little enough was left* [emphasis added]. What people would hunt for food when they were not hungry and there was food left to eat? (95).

What further limits the Neanderthals' capacity for an extended self is their inability to dedicate their undivided attention to any picture, event or a change in their natural world if 'there seemed no danger in it' (42). After all, a strong sense of consciousness of individual experience, past or present, is dependent on attention, and a stronger presence of the self requires taking the self as the target of attention. As a result, they are forced to adopt a simple perception of time made more static by their inability to consciously perceive a difference between past events and current ones which is why they find '[today] ... like yesterday and to-morrow,' and why they are unable to comprehend any past event, including Mal's painful memory of the forest fire, that does not fit in with their conception of a static flow of time (47, 73). Their cognitive limitations, to put it briefly, have not only created a rigid perception of life that hardly conceives of changes in any ways, but also a static sense of identity that has no autobiographical memory, nor a distinct narrative of its own individual past aside from the one that defines the history of the group as a whole (35). Moreover, the Neanderthals' dysfunctional memory along with their limited ability to rationalize have made it nearly impossible for each and every one of them to create their own personal interpretation of the world they occupy. As a result, everyone ends up 'experiencing the exact same thing' (Clements 78). This can be said to be advantageous to a certain extent because the absence of distinct individual experiences makes their knowledge about themselves almost identical to others, thereby maximizing their cognitive empathy or their capacity to interpret the mental states of those around them. Consequently, it is easy for them to converge into 'one mind' as they have empathically converged into one body, and to adopt the near-telepathic mode of picture sharing as their primary and most practical mode of communication, in addition to their less functional means of language and bodily gestures (*Inheritors* 38, 93). As advantageous as this particular aspect seems, however, especially when it comes to

promoting their sense of oneness and to reflecting their community as functioning as one whole organism rather than a mass of competing individuals brought together by the common purpose of survival, their near-telepathic cognitive empathy does not seem to have provided them with much of an advantage in dealing with the difficulties posed by their ecological realm or their hostile invaders.

Another aspect that further reinforces the Neanderthals' lack of a clear identity and their subsequent and more primitive expression of their empathic tendencies is their fragmented consciousness which keeps their personal experiences from becoming fully incorporated into their awareness of their own individual selves.⁶¹ Lok, for instance, feels split between 'inside' and 'outside' Lok most of the time and is unable to properly integrate his instinctual cognition and his consciousness of his surrounding with his own self-awareness (124). This compromises whatever chance he might have been able to seize to break free from the mechanistic control of his instincts or to attain some semblance of flexibility in navigating the ecological realm. After all, his senses and instincts appear to be operating on their own and communicating with him through what Lok perceives as voices commanding him to do things. And since his self-awareness is almost useless in creating an executive I that can cohesively bring his conscious experience of his surroundings together, he has no choice but to surrender to the fragmented agencies governing his responses to the outside world most of the time:

Now, more clearly than ever before there were two Loks, outside and inside. The inner Lok could look for ever. But the outer that breathed and heard and smelt and was awake always, was insistent and tightening on him like another skin. It forced the knowledge of its fear, its sense of peril on him long before his brain could understand the picture (141).⁶²

⁶¹ One of the key aspects of the people's consciousness that sets them apart from the *Homo sapiens* is that their awareness of their surroundings disappears even when they are awake. Golding describes this moment at first as a presence of 'many minds in the overhang; and then perhaps no mind at all' (34). Though their ears continue to pick up the sounds of the wind and the water, their 'vaulted heads' register nothing on their conscious awareness (62). It is only when Mal speaks that they get 'called back into their individual skulls' (34).

⁶² In other words, what Lok perceives through his sense is not integrated into one whole experience, but is communicated to him as commands from distinct agencies that are not his own. His nose and ears, for example, are not under the direct control of an executive self, which as I have shown before is not quite distinguished, but are acting on their own. This raises the question of agency since Lok cannot seem to be able to govern his sensory faculties. He has little free will and is seen as following whatever his instincts dictate. This is made worse by the fact that rationality plays no role in his mental functions. His knowledge of the other, for example, was not 'built up ... by reasoned deduction but because in every place the scent told him—do this!' (77).

One might deem Lok justified in his preference for his outside cognition over his inside one, considering how advanced Lok's senses are compared to modern humans and how his reliance on an underdeveloped 'inside Lok' would put him at a disadvantage and compromise his relationship to the natural world. It is worth noting, however, that this preference serves a much deeper function than demonstrating the Neanderthals' limited cognition and mechanistic animal intelligence because it reinforces Golding's view of them as the naturally moral species of the novel. If the innocent simpleminded Lok had been more attuned to his self-awareness, he would have eventually come to develop a sharper sense of identity, making it impossible for him to keep himself from suffering the burden of isolation with its terrors and anxieties, or to even maintain the characteristic overemphatic tendencies that define the nature of the group as a whole. This means that as crucial as self-awareness is to morality and the evolution of empathy, its association with other advanced cognitive functions is highly likely to have encouraged the emergence of what could only be defined as malignant, selfish and narcissistic tendencies which would render morality and evil as inextricably connected to one another.⁶³ The capacity for an extended self, for instance, or the ability to visualize the self in future scenarios, has been noted as one of the essential cognitive functions that promote control and consequently morality given how it makes it possible for an individual to imagine how certain actions can play out and whether they would negatively affect or harm others (Leary and Buttermore). However, as Josipovici had observed, '[i]f I can plan ahead then I can also desire what I do not at present have; I can envy what another man has and I have not; I can imagine the embrace of another man's wife' ('Source' 240-1). Such is precisely the kind of paradoxicality that characterizes the Homo Sapien community and sets it apart from the highly empathic sociality of the Neanderthals.

When Golding first introduces the Homo Sapiens through the innocent perspective of the cognitively challenged Lok, he not only brings out modern intelligence and self-awareness as the Wellsian virtues of evolution that aid the Homo Sapiens in mastering their ecological realm, but also highlights how such functions have encouraged the emergence of selfishness, hostility and aggression in both their in-group and out-group relations. In fact, their capacity to adopt cruelty is supposed to highlight the notion of moral devolution rather than progressive evolution since it brings the new people in stark contrast to the Neanderthals and

⁶³ The association between evil, morality and modern intelligence has been explored in detail in the previous chapter.

their natural, indiscriminate and unenforced expression of empathy. Despite the selfishness, narcissism and self-centredness that mark the relations of the Homo Sapiens, however, there are instances in their social life such as those when Vivani nurses the kidnapped Neanderthal baby, or when the little Homo Sapiens girl Tanakil interacts with Liku that even the less intelligent Lok manages to recognize because he shares these basic empathic tendencies with the Homo Sapiens. Like the Neanderthals, the new people are capable of working for the good of the group as a whole, travelling through dangerous territories together, hunting as a group for food, and collaborating in rituals. There are moments, however, when concern for their own individual wellbeing overpowers their social instincts and goads them into putting their own needs above those of the others. Such self-serving tendencies are not possible for the Neanderthals to conceive because they lack the sense of identity that allows for their development. It is unlikely that the new people, however, might attain the state of unity and overactive empathy that characterize the Neanderthals' community given their obvious possession of the kind of intelligence that allows for the evolution of distinct character which Lok naively senses in their individual scents and their different hairstyles (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 93; *Inheritors* 138-9). It is also possible to detect the Homo Sapiens' individuality in their full reliance on language as their primary mode of communication, considering how it not only provides a testament to their cognitive superiority, but also highlights their incapacity to maintain the Neanderthals' near-telepathic means of communication, an accomplishment that stems, as previously shown, from the kind of empathy that dissolves individual boundaries. This would make evolution appear as a force responsible for drawing modern humanity out of a state of unison into one of marked isolation where individuals, as highly conscious animals, are alienated from the natural world and from those around them by their consciousness of their own difference and their inability to wholly let others into their own existential experience of living. According to Gabriel Josipovici:

[o]ne of the results of the fall, Golding suggests, is the creation of individual character. Indeed, the fall can be seen as man's sudden consciousness of himself as unique and distinct from other men; and the fall is perpetuated because once this discovery has been made man is at pains to protect and nurse this unique self till all its desires are fulfilled, including the most basic desire of all, the desire to be immortal, to retain our consciousness of ourselves for ever and ever ('Source' 253).

Being conscious of an individual self means being aware of its own individual needs, desires and wishes which are highly likely to give rise to conflicts and clash with the interests of others or those that benefit the group as a whole if they are allowed to be selfishly pursued unchecked. This explains why the Homo Sapiens' society seems less cohesive and marked by apparent discord and strife, especially between the new people and their leader Marlan, whom they hold fully responsible for the hard conditions of fear, hunger and anxiety that they find themselves forced to undergo and endure. The new people are, of course, responsible in a sense for these difficulties, considering how they are the ones who 'foolishly' agreed to accompany him into the island in the first place, as Tuami has clearly indicated (*Inheritors* 226). Still, their negative reaction can be somewhat justified by the fact that Marlan has proven himself to be a terrible and inadequate chieftain who fails to fulfil his duties or even consider putting the group's interests above everything else. Unlike the Neanderthal leader Mal who is more of a loving father than a figure of authority, Marlan can be a selfish power-hungry politician who is after the construction of a self-serving government that draws its authority from fear rather than respect. It is Marlan, after all, who is shown as having been driven by his blind desire to possess another man's woman to elope with Vivani without concern for how his actions are going to affect the rest of his tribesmen. Marlan's selfishness and failure to take responsibility for his actions also show in his choice to secretly appease his hunger by wolfing down the piece of meat that Lok has thrown to the captured Liku, instead of striving to do something about the people's state of starvation. This indisputable expression of selfishness and corrupt leadership almost brings his tribesmen into a collective act of rebellion, a conflict that he temporarily manages to avert by reminding them of the authority he draws from the stag god and the threat that awaits them in the forest (165-7). Such sins, however, do not measure up in horridness to his crimes against the innocent forest dwellers who are not only made to suffer the death of most of their kin at the hands of his terrorized people, but also brought to experience the excruciating loss of their helpless children and their being reduced to pets and sacrificial offers to the stag god. After all, it is Marlan's fear of the inevitability of the loss of his status as the clan's head so long as his people's hunger remains unappeased that directs him into adopting his most vicious and extreme measure of sacrificing the child Liku as a way of taking care of the people's problem and his (168-9). Golding even asserts the brutality and viciousness of Marlan at the end of the novel through the tribal artist Tuami who cannot help but regard Marlan in the same manner by which he and his people have conceived the Neanderthals, that is as a reddish demon: 'The sun was blazing on the red sail and Marlan was red. His arms and legs were contracted,

his hair stood out and his beard, his teeth were wolf's teeth and his eyes like blind stone's' (229). The scene is also crucial in that it exposes the real beasts in the novel as well as reinforces the irony of how even though there is nothing actually demonic about the new people's appearance, it is their beastly nature that leads them into perceiving the innocent Neanderthals as dangerous forest demons that should be eradicated.

Such a representation helps in casting Marlan as the most egotistical and cruel out of all of the Homo Sapiens, but that does not mean that he is the only one capable of cruelty and of pursuing his selfish ends. Tuami is another crucial figure who perfectly depicts the complexity of human nature represented in its capacity to be moral and selfish at the same time. Though he does not appear to be openly opposing Marlan, he still holds so much hatred and disdain towards him to the point where he sharpens his knife in hopes of being able to murder the old man one day (226). He also has no qualms about going through the risk of quenching his lust by chasing after another man's woman despite the feelings of contempt that he holds against her for being too vain (224-5).⁶⁴ One could also say that his assistance to Marlan in giving the child Tanakil as an offering to the Neanderthals against her mother's will classifies as a moral transgression that is as serious as Marlan's merciless act of sacrificing Liku (229). It should be noted, however, that such heinous acts of sacrificing children would not have been carried out if the whole community was not in favour of them as a means by which to appease the stag god and the forest demons to the ultimate end of saving their individual lives. Contrary to the Neanderthals, who are seen as full of indiscriminate concern for one another, the Homo Sapiens' community appears to be a less cohesive and more complex mass of individual interests brought together by the one intention of surviving a common threat which is ironically none other than the passive and innocent Neanderthals. This should make the formation and implementation of a basic system of laws more like a dire necessity to the intelligent Homo Sapiens since failure to do so might not only encourage the pursuit of selfish interests at the expense of others, but also disintegrate the unity of the group in the face of possible threats, including those posed by the imaginary forest demons. Not much is said, of course, about the possibility of their having a moral code given the fact that most of the events of the novel are reported through the innocent perspective of a Neanderthal who is not even capable of comprehending the behaviour of his

⁶⁴ In fact, regarding a woman as belonging to one man, a conception that stands in opposition to the Neanderthals' sex life, can be controversial and might even be seen as an argument against moral progress. This matter will become particularly manifested in *Pincher Martin* and *Free Fall* in the manner by which the protagonists of both novels exploit, control and mistreat the women they seek to possess, subdue and break.

intellectual superiors. However, it seems logical to assume based on the fact that they are a representation of modern humanity who possess the capacity for symbolic culture, religion and aggression, behaviours that are associated with advanced cognition and consequently morality, that the Homo Sapiens might have been capable, after all, of implementing a moral code that governs their in-group relations and their ties to the outside world. This might actually help in drawing them closer to Wells' people, especially when brought in comparison to the Neanderthals in *The Inheritors* and their inability to formulate a sophisticated moral system. It should be noted, however, that the Neanderthal's lack of such a capacity is not merely an outcome of the near absence of the higher cognitive functions that support it, but more of an expression of the fact that they do not have the evolutionary sins that demand its formation and development as a countermeasure in the first place. According to Sober and Wilson in their summary of *Unto Others* (1998):

[p]eople can have specific likes and dislikes without this producing a socially shared moral code. And if everyone dislikes certain things, what is the point of there being a moral code that says that those things should be shunned? ... Behaviours that people do spontaneously by virtue of their own desires don't need to have a moral code laid on top of them. The obvious suggestion is that the social function of morality is to get people to do things that they would not otherwise be disposed to do, or to strengthen dispositions that people already have in weaker forms.

In other words, the lack of a moral code in the Neanderthal community, an aspect that Wells might have implied to reinforce his argument of moral progress, may have been nothing more to Golding than a testament to the Neanderthals' innocence. This can be ironic in a sense because although the process of evolution in Golding's novel is represented as having granted the Homo Sapiens the intellectual superiority that should have supposedly allowed for the development of morality, it has dulled their sense of empathy to a point where morality has become less of a natural impulse and more of system that has to be enforced for groups to survive.⁶⁵ Judging by the Homo Sapiens' unity against the imaginary threat posed by the Neanderthals, it seems logical to conclude that whatever system of laws, cultural practices and religious precepts might have been implemented for the enforcement or support of a moral code have succeeded to a certain extent in fulfilling its primary biological function of

⁶⁵ I should stress that I am not suggesting that past phases of human evolution were more empathic, but this seems to be how Golding chose to communicate his view of evolution as being more about change and less about progress as previously indicated.

promoting group cohesion. However, for beings as intelligent as the Homo Sapiens, morality may also come to fulfil another crucial function that has to do with the anxiety arising out of an understanding of living in a world where events, disasters and victimizations are random and beyond someone's control (Janoff-Bulman and Yopyk 126-7). This should bring the matter of religion into focus as a symbolic and cultural construct that is believed to have evolved for the purpose of neutralizing these kinds of anxieties. Such a conception of the world can also aid in highlighting religion as a crucial factor for the development of the notion of causal agency which can be particularly instrumental in the implementation of a moral code.

Most religions, if not all, involve a moral component that aids in reinforcing the social function of promoting group cohesion, creating a religious identity and establishing social order, in addition to their primary psychological function of providing a meaningful worldview that can help in addressing certain existential questions and concerns (Broom 26; Boyer 6; Batson and Stocks 145). These concerns may arise out of people's awareness of the fact that the social and ecological realms which they occupy can make securing their needs and desires difficult if not life-threatening (145). As a result, people are usually gripped by anxieties over matters that can range from problems as simple as securing the most basic necessities for survival, such as food and shelter, to the much more complex desire to account for all the violence and agony in the world, the unpredictability of disease, death and tragedies, and the possibility of either becoming a random target for the violent tendencies of others or falling victim to the unforeseeable calamities of nature (145-6). In other words, an understanding of evil in terms of natural or moral suffering can be a great source of anxiety for beings who possess a clear sense of identity and the capacity to reason beyond the here and now (Paulson 5; Janoff-Bulman and Yopyk 126). One way of dealing with the cause of this anxiety is to first seek to understand it through creating an agent, a deity, that can be perceived as responsible for it, and to try to appease it through gifts and offerings for the hopeful outcomes of minimizing the unpredictability of evil and attaining some comforting illusion of control over it (Paulson 5; Batson and Stocks 147; Golding in Biles, *Talk* 111). This explains why some people normally resort to creating two deities or gods, especially since it allows them to hold one as commanding all that is good and benign in the world, and to deem the other as responsible for putting mankind through the evils of death, calamities and suffering (Paulson 5). When it comes to monotheist religions, however, there is the difficulty of reconciling the existence of evil with the presence of one kind god. This is usually dealt with through the construction of the common concepts of sin and punishment.

Such constructs can help in providing the same comforting illusion of control given how they contribute to maintaining the belief in a world ruled by a just deity where evil comes to those who disobey it and transgress against others (Paulson 6; Janoff-Bulman and Yopyk 127).⁶⁶ This allows subscribers to define the notion of evil in terms of ‘doing’ and ‘suffering’: the former being traced to abusing the gift of free will and misusing it to disobey god and to bring intentional harm to others, and the latter being god’s punishment for acts of disobedience and the moral transgressions of mankind (Paulson 4). Conceptions such as these can be particularly useful to reinforcing moral codes, considering how they help in creating a system of reward and punishment that can support the belief in divine justice, and consequently assist in neutralizing the anxiety resulting out of the awareness of the unpredictability of natural and moral evils (Paulson 8-9; Janoff-Bulman and Yopyk 127). But in order for these components of religion to evolve, certain cognitive demands must first be met. Such a notion can be said to have been utilized in the creation of the world of *The Inheritors* given Golding’s concern with the sins of modern intelligence and the fact that he intentionally represented one religion as remarkably more benign than the other.

Like the new people, the Neanderthals are capable of maintaining a religious worldview that aids them in understanding their own existence and defines their ties to the natural world. Still, what is uniquely distinct about the Neanderthals’ religion, aside from its justifiable simplicity, is the absence of any account that can adequately explain or provide a comforting illusion of control over many of the common concerns related to the problems of death and suffering. In fact, the people’s conception of their deity as a mother figure ‘in the continuous act of feminine creation’ not only attests to their fixation on or idealization of life (Kinhead-Weekes and Gregor 77), but also reflects how their incapacity to reason beyond the here and now has resulted in limiting their anxieties to attaining the immediate and most basic necessities for survival. Such a limitation might explain why the Neanderthals’ belief system does not offer a solid perception of an afterlife, evident in Fa’s puzzlement and confusion regarding the implications of a problem as complex as that of ceasing to exist: ‘Is one alive who was dead? Is one come back from Oa’s belly as it may be my baby that died in the cave by the sea?’ (*Inheritors* 70).⁶⁷ It also explains why the Neanderthals’ closest vision of an

⁶⁶ In the biblical account of the loss of the Garden of Eden, for instance, God is seen as punishing mankind for the first evil act of disobedience by condemning them to a lifetime of toil and hardships on earth where they are to experience the natural evils of death, disasters and sickness in addition to the likelihood of falling victim to the moral transgressions of others (Paulson 4-5).

⁶⁷ Though the Neanderthals follow the ritual-like burial of Mal where they place meat and water in his grave and ask him to drink when he is thirsty, and eat when he is hungry, the action is only significant in the context of the present (*Inheritors* 90-1). The burial is meant to return Mal to Oa’s belly so long as a concrete reminder of death

Edenic existence, depicted as involving a time ‘when it was summer all year round and the flowers and fruit hung on the same branch,’ is mostly catered to addressing their physiological needs rather than accounting for the more complex existential concerns of death, natural calamities and suffering.⁶⁸ Their religion might be perceived as similar to Christianity in its conception of a deity in terms of parental affection and its construction of a paradisaal genesis that brings to mind reminders of the biblical account of creation. Nevertheless, it remains as strikingly different in that it does not explain the loss of their Edenic state in terms of sin and punishment. This could be traced to their static view of life that excludes them from being gripped by anxieties over the randomness and unpredictability of natural disasters, and the need to explain and control them through the construction of notions such as those of natural evils and divine retribution, as previously shown. There is also the fact that the Neanderthals have an instinctive unenforced absence of selfishness, conflicts and in-group aggression that denies them the understanding of moral evil if it is to be interpreted in terms of making another conscious being suffer. As a result, they are incapable of rationalizing whatever misfortune or calamity that plagues the serenity of their lives such as the forest fire or the decline of their Garden of Eden as more than a natural disaster (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 77-8). It is also possible to see such an outcome as all the more plausible given how the development of the notion of natural evil or divine retribution is normally perceived as dependent on some understanding of moral evil or transgressions.⁶⁹ The Neanderthals’ lack of some understanding of evil and aggression, to put

is still perceived. It should not be interpreted as an indication of a belief in the afterlife because the Neanderthals are not in the possession of the cognitive capacities that allow them to project themselves into the future and imagine possible scenarios as I have already shown. In fact, their inability to immediately perceive Ha’s death shows the large role that their unique perception of time plays in diluting their anxiety. When Nil first informs them of how she could not sense Ha’s presence in the forest and that she could only conclude that he is dead, the people find it difficult to see the picture and understand the weight of the tragedy she has communicated: ‘[b]ecause they could not see what she saw they stood still and meditated formlessly the picture of no Ha. But Ha was with them. They knew his every inch and expression, his individual scent, his wise and silent face. His thorn bush lay against the rock, part of the shaft water-smooth from his hot grip. The accustomed rock waited for him, there before them was the worn mark of his body on the earth’ (68). His scent might have disappeared in the forest, but it continues to linger in his possessions along with other signs of his presence and because present is privileged in their temporal processing, they cannot help but dismiss the past that they have not witnessed, and the future that is muddled with the present signs of existence (69). As a result, only Nil is gripped by the anxiety of loss because she is the only one who has experienced the frightful disappearance of his scent and the subsequent implication of death.

⁶⁸ In addition to that, their perception of a life where there is no toil or hunger seems to be geared more towards the present and the nearest future. Following the people’s migration to the spring residence in the forest, Lok cannot help but believe that their goddess has awaited their return and that it would soon turn the frosty forest into the same bountiful garden that their ancestors enjoyed prior to the environmental changes that made it difficult for them to secure food or that caused the forest fire responsible for killing most of their tribesmen (31-2).

⁶⁹ I should note that Paulson’s definition of evil is almost identical to the evolutionary one provided by Duntley and Buss which they associate with the severity of the fitness costs inflicted on other beings, as shown in the

it briefly, has not only contributed to maintaining their instinctual morality, but also denied them the existential anxiety of random victimization that demands the development and enforcement of notions of sin, divine retribution and moral laws as anxiety buffers.

When it comes to the Homo Sapiens, however, religion is not that simple. After all, the new people do possess the kind of intelligence that should supposedly be capable of perceiving, visualizing and addressing the complex existential concerns associated with the problems of death, natural and moral evil, and suffering. This means that although both religions are similar in the sense that they both are represented as addressing the social function of promoting group cohesion to some extent, especially in the case of the Homo Sapiens who lack the level of empathy that brings the Neanderthal community together, they remain as strikingly different in many respects due to their having emerged in response to each species' concern with a different set of problems. Such differences can mostly be reflected in the Homo Sapiens' fixation on symbolic practices associated with their fears and anxieties regarding the safety of the hunt and the eradication of the forest demons, as opposed to the Neanderthals' fascination with the life-affirming force of Oa. In fact, the Homo Sapiens are seen as compelled by such concerns to appeal to some supernatural entity through blood offerings, possibly in the hopes of promoting the success of their endeavours and of exercising some control over any unpredictable problem that may arise. This supernatural entity is nothing more than a stag god to whom Pine-tree, for example, shows the willingness to have his finger cut as a blood offering (*Inheritors* 147). Given how unfulfilling and ineffective the practice eventually proves to be, however, particularly to Marlan, it soon grows to include the ritualistic killing of one of the demons' own as a means of bringing evil and most importantly the problem of hunger under control.⁷⁰ When this, too, proves ineffective, the new people eventually resort to presenting a more serious sacrificial offer to a

previous chapter (104). It is also important to note that the construction of the concepts of sin and punishment, according to Paulson, are an effort at reconciling the presence of evil with that of loving god, but since the Neanderthals have no understanding of evil whether natural or moral, they have no knowledge of an entity or a presence whose nature or existence conflicts with that of their mother goddess, and as such, they do not experience the need to create the notions of sin and punishment (Paulson 6). As the events of the novel progress, however, and as the Neanderthals come in contact with the aggressive Homo Sapiens, the people will begin to show signs of emotional and psychological turmoil at having to understand the aggressive nature of beings whose existence conflicts with the benign one of their Oa.

⁷⁰ The Neanderthals also follow the practice of offerings and they are seen as engaging in the act in order to help Mal recover (70), but they do not kill or shed blood to attain the benefits they desire. According to Boyer, the idea behind offerings in most religions seems to be modelled after the laws of social exchange which dictate that something of value must be given for a benefit of an equal value to be gained (207). This brings theory of mind and the fact that deities are normally anthropomorphised into focus as matters that could help highlight how each species has constructed its deity after its own nature, and why one deity demands the violent exchange of blood and the other does not.

different target, aside from that of the stag god which is probably no longer perceived as powerful enough to keep the demons away.⁷¹ This means that instead of giving up the practice of blood offerings after the failure of the ritual of eating Liku, the Homo Sapiens find themselves compelled by their fear and desperation to seek the more costly measure of human sacrifice as a much more proper price to pay for bringing evil under control. This results in giving their own child, Tanakil, to the Neanderthals rather than the stag god in an effort to rectify their mistake, placate the Neanderthals and have the demons leave them alone, especially after Lok and Fa invade the Homo Sapiens' camp in search of their kidnapped children. Such a measure may be considered more appalling than that of offering Liku given the fact that Liku is perceived as nothing more than a demon that has to be annihilated in one way or another. However, the dire psychological need to bring evil under control seems to have not only made giving up one of their own for the purpose of saving the group as a whole justifiable, but also morally forgivable. This is actually significant in more than one way because it shows that religion can sometimes be more of a support to immoral practices rather than a hindrance, and that defining what is moral and what is not within a system of laws is susceptible to a number of factors, including those that prioritize the needs of certain individuals over others, no matter how brutal and unjust such prioritizing might seem.⁷² After all, the tendency to implement a moral code, evolutionarily speaking, is an adaptation promoted by natural selection to foster social cohesion for the purpose of maintaining the great advantage that group living could ensure for the survival and reproductive success of individuals (de Waal, *Empathy* Ch. 1; Rosas).⁷³

This might ultimately brand morality as biologically selfish, but that should not be taken to mean that most moral actions are psychologically conniving, calculative and devoid of

⁷¹ This is, in fact, a normal psychological response. If the sacrifice failed to produce the desired effect, the rationalizing that follows is not that the practice should be dropped for proving useless, but that the ritual was not carried in the right manner, or that the offering was not given to the correct god (Boyer 321).

⁷² The same thing can be said about evil. Behaviours that are normally classified as aggressive, selfish or evil are already established as biologically rooted, but to categorize an action as evil is more of a subjective matter dependent on personal or cultural points of view. The act of annihilating the Neanderthals might have seemed perfectly justifiable for the majority of the Homo Sapiens, but for readers who are familiar with the people's innocent nature, such an act is most likely to be considered immoral.

⁷³ There had been debates among biologists and evolutionary psychologists regarding the implications of a biological morality with some considering morality as biologically selfish, and others declaring it as biologically altruistic if, and only if, considered in terms of group selection. The reasoning behind such a restriction, of course, is the difficulty of reconciling natural selection with morality if it were to be considered in terms of individual selection because it is mostly seen as limiting the freedom of the individual as long as it serves the greater good of the group (Rosas). For advocates of individual selection, however, morality is biologically selfish and had proven its adaptive value in situations of social exchange as I have previously explained (Rosas). A third possibility is that morality is biologically selfish, but psychologically altruistic because if it were not, the ability to detect ulterior motives would have prevented morality from prospering and fulfilling its function in promoting group cohesion (Rosas).

selfless and altruistic motivations (Rosas; de Waal, *Empathy* Ch. 1). Acts of kindness come naturally to both man and animal, a belief that even the seemingly pessimistic Golding subscribes to given his declared faith in the instinctual roots of morality which can still be clearly detected in the manner by which he chose to represent certain aspects of the Homo Sapiens' life. Vivani's maternal affection towards the Neanderthal baby, for instance, not only brings reminders of the compassionate Fa who, like Vivani, has been through the devastating experience of losing a child, but also shows how the Homo Sapiens are capable of being empathic towards 'lesser' beings, even if they have already been branded and declared by the group as devils.⁷⁴ There is also the tribal artist whose experience of guilt over what he and his tribesmen have done to the people demonstrates that it is not only the egocentric Vivani who is capable of showing empathy, but also the arrogant Tuami who has proven on occasion to be as capable of selfishness and cruelty as Marlan.⁷⁵ In fact, Tuami's inability to rationalize guilt away, despite having done everything in accordance with the religious practices and laws of the group, actually shows the Homo Sapiens as still in possession of some level of the Neanderthals' instinctual moral and empathic sense that does not require the forceful elicitation of a moral code.⁷⁶ Their natural impulse for empathy, though, is different from the Neanderthals' in that it does not operate indiscriminately; nor does it allow them to lose their individual sense of self the way the Neanderthals do, because they are still in possession of an acute sense of identity that allows them to perceive some clear boundaries between their own experiences and those of others. There is also the fact that despite the human ability to extend empathy to animals and other individuals, even in the absence of the emotional attachment that comes with being a part of a group, a family or a community, there still remains certain constraints that govern the conditions under which empathy and sympathy are to be readily shown to others given how they can be quite costly and unaffordable at times (de Waal, *Good Natured* 88).

⁷⁴ Tuami, of course, cannot perceive her affection as genuine and can only conclude that her interest in the little Neanderthal is merely the result of her becoming possessed by him, an opinion that could be attributed to either his view of her as too vain and egocentric to care for others, or his belief that the Neanderthals are nothing more than devils (*Inheritors* 229). However, her vicious defence of the Neanderthal baby against Marlan's schemes, an act that is shown as having resulted in sacrificing Liku instead of the new one, might be more of a support to a certain degree of genuine affection for the baby rather than a desire to keep him as a pet, especially since the measure of sacrifice is depicted as having been employed to save everyone in the group, including herself (168).

⁷⁵ The act of sacrificing Tanakil seems to have been done out of guilt. According to Golding, the Homo Sapiens 'propitiate because they have done something they know is at the very least against this kind of creature; they've eaten this girl, and eating a girl is a powerful affair' (Golding in Biles, *Talk* 111).

⁷⁶ Despite the dark undertones in the ending, Tuami's guilt seems to offer some hope for mankind given how guilt allows humans to work on themselves, a condition which Golding deemed as necessary for humanity to eradicate their moral ills (Golding in Biles, *Talk* 105).

Judging by the circumstances that forced the Homo Sapiens into abandoning their former sanctuary and seeking the questionable safety of the forest, it might be logical to assume that whatever expression of hostility the Homo Sapiens have shown towards the Neanderthals might not have simply been brought about by an outright capacity for aggression, or an inability to show empathy to those who are not part of their social group. After all, the Homo Sapiens are represented from the moment they are first introduced into the novel as having been forced into a state of overwhelming anxiety, fear and terror that could have led their psychological defence mechanisms to overpower their natural sense of empathy, and to turn the innocent forest dwellers into a demonic presence that has to be annihilated at all costs for them to survive. This helps in showing the Homo Sapiens' capacity for evil and violence as more of a transient condition of empathy erosion made possible by a number of factors, including their basic understanding of the human capacity for aggression and their utilization of it in their attempt at theorizing the thoughts and intentions of those around them.⁷⁷ However, as inadequate as that may seem in depicting the Homo Sapiens in a more favourable light, it is important to note that the lack of any capacity to suspend feelings of empathy can be quite disadvantageous given how it is represented as having made the Neanderthals unable to prioritize their survival, to put their basic needs first, to hunt for meat when necessary, and to deal with the threats posed by other beings and individuals in their surroundings.⁷⁸ Such a lack or inability to control empathy is connected, of course, to the Neanderthals' underdeveloped cognitive functions, an aspect which I have previously targeted as having helped in bringing the people's nature closer to the innocence of children who have yet to attain an acute sense of identity with all its terrors and anxieties. As a result, it might be tempting to conclude that like the Neanderthals, modern children are born free of

⁷⁷ It is also possible for people to force themselves into such a state of empathy erosion by dehumanizing and demonizing others through the use of the culturally constructed notions of good and evil. Though the Neanderthals are not particularly referred to as evil in the context of the novel, they are still regarded as demons, a conception that is basically the result of the Homo Sapiens' externalizing their own evil as Golding had indicated. Conditions of empathy erosion can be, according to Baron-Cohen, either transient which applies to the Homo Sapiens, or at least Tuami who recovers from this condition after he and his tribesmen hit the safety of the water, or permanent which is more applicable to individuals who had their empathy switched off by some genetic disorder or some form of childhood abuse (6). The latter condition seems to be more applicable to Pincher Martin who fails to employ a double minded perspective and keep the feelings and emotions of others in mind most of the time as I will shows in the next chapter.

⁷⁸ Not all levels of empathy, or empathy erosion are adaptive though. According to Baron-Cohen, 'moderate empathy levels are most adaptive. Being too other-centered means one would never pursue one's own ambitions, or act competitively, for fear of upsetting or diminishing others. Being too self-centered has the advantage of pursuing one's own ambitions to the exclusion of all else... Striking the balance at majority levels of empathy may be an evolved adaption that confers on the individual the benefits of empathy without its disadvantages' (181).

original sin, a concept that may help in viewing the fall as a later occurrence in life when the unfortunate yet necessary capacity for selfishness evolves and results in constraining humanity's natural capacity for empathy. It is even possible to perceive Tanakil as a support for this notion, given how she is most probably the only person among the Homo Sapiens who is represented as having managed to establish some connection and exchange names with the Neanderthal Liku without letting the group's assumption of her as a forest demon overpower her child curiosity or her natural sense of empathy. Tanakil is also different from her tribesmen in that she is not shown as attaching any murderous intentions to Liku's actions, evident in her lack of reluctance to accept the fungi that Liku has offered just like any child who has never been taught to mistrust the intentions of others would under similar circumstances (*Inheritors* 155-7). However, seeing her retaliate against Liku's hesitance to follow her across the water by taking a stick and beating the helpless Neanderthal girl with it until she is forced by the painful mistreatment to suppress her fear of water and to comply with the wishes of her intellectual superior, might lead us to reevaluate our initial conception of Tanakil and consequently, therefore, to begin questioning her innocence (161). Like the boys in *Lord of the Flies*, Tanakil's innocence is different from that of the Neanderthals in that she carries the roots of modern humanity's sin in her child self, a point that Golding believes to be manifested in the child's tendency to turn selfish as soon as she '[develops] any capacity for acting on the world outside' through the evolutionary 'gift' of intelligence (in Carey, 'Talks' 174). The evolutionary fall of humanity, then, remains the same as the biblical one for it is through the evolution of intelligence and the subsequent creation of unique identities that mankind come to embrace the regrettable capacity for selfishness which Golding deems as humanity's original sin (174). And since the Neanderthals are denied such mental functions which would have allowed them to curb their empathy and to subdue others to their will and control, it should be safe to conclude that despite Golding's reliance on biblical imagery, the Neanderthals remain as the unfallen species of the novel up to the very moment of their death and extinction. One cannot help but wonder, though, if the Neanderthals might have managed to maintain their innocence if they had continued to face the pressure of dealing with those harsh ecological conditions, or if they were left alive following their encounter with the aggressive Homo Sapiens.

There is no argument over the fact that the Neanderthals, particularly Lok, are represented as having experienced a noticeable change in the workings of their cognitive functions over the course of the novel as the challenges in their environment increase in complexity, especially with the arrival of the Homo Sapiens. This may have led certain critics such as

Peter Green to emphasize the biblical allusion to the fall, to interpret the Neanderthals' encounter with the new people in terms of the account of creation and the temptation of Adam and Eve, and to regard the Homo Sapiens as the serpent whose actions bring the Neanderthals out of their state of innocence and into that of sin and corruption (68). Such a conclusion may even find its support in some of the adopted views regarding the Neanderthals' intelligence that seem to classify the noted lack of higher cognitive functions in terms of 'liabilities', 'deficiencies', and 'limitations' that the Neanderthals eventually break out of as they come in contact with evil (De Paolo 64-5, Redpath 90). It is important to keep in mind, however, that most of the events of the novel are narrated through the perspective of the least perceptive member of the Neanderthals who cannot even measure up to the intelligence of the youngest member of his tribe or even rise to the expectations of his kindred following the death of Ha and Mal. In fact, Lok's cognitive limitation seems to be a major source of frustration, not only for readers struggling to understand his point of view, but also for his fellow tribe members, including Fa, who cannot help but take charge of leading the helpless Lok through the rescue effort despite the fact that her action is in clear violation of the tribe's tradition of leaving the leadership role to men. According to Baker, attempts at examining the Neanderthals' cognitive capacities through Lok's 'level of receptivity' may tempt readers 'to dismiss the cave man as stupid, but such a judgement (common among the reviewers of the book) is inaccurate and highly dangerous as a basis for interpretation' (*Study* 24). The Neanderthals may have been commonly perceived as the simple and innocent species that was forced by the new pressure of having to deal with their violent invaders into embracing the higher cognitive faculties associated with modern intelligence. However, the fact that they have shown signs of readiness for these changes well before the arrival of the Homo Sapiens not only raises doubts about the stability of their innocence, but also points to the possibility that the seeds of aggression may have already been biologically sown. The scene of the hunt is actually one of the most crucial scenes in the novel that could help reinforce this conclusion because despite the fact that it involves a dead prey that can experience no pain or suffering, the diction and style used to communicate the hunt's details seem to raise some concern over the Neanderthals' moral state:

The doe was wrecked and scattered. Fa split open her belly, slit the complicated stomach and spilt the sour cropped grass and broken shoots on the earth. Lok beat in the skull to get at the brain and levered open the mouth to wrench away the tongue. They filled the stomach with tit-bits and twisted up the guts so that the stomach

became a floppy bag. ... Now the limbs were smashed and bloodily jointed Liku crouched by the doe eating the piece of liver that Fa had given her. The air between the rocks was forbidding with violence and sweat, with the rich smell of meat and wickedness. ... [T]here was a kind of darkness in the air under the watching birds.

Lok spoke loudly, acknowledging the darkness.

‘This is very bad. Oa brought the doe out of her belly.’

Fa muttered through her clenched teeth as her hands tore.

‘Do not speak of that one.’ (54).

Lok’s admission of his actions as ‘bad’ and his need to rationalize his deeds against a dead doe by stating that the hungry Neanderthals have no other choice but to hunt for meat might be noted as a support to his highly moral nature and innocence, as Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor have observed (80). But what is particularly concerning about the scene is not only the Neanderthals’ readiness to justify and dismiss possible moral transgressions the way Tuami and Marlan have done, but also their ‘marginal’ capacity to suppress their empathy in favour of their interests. This is evident in Fa’s reprehension of Lok for reminding the both of them that the being they are slaying and gutting is mothered by none other than the goddess they both love and revere. The Neanderthals, after all, are self-aware, and though their consciousness of their individual selves does not measure up to the complexity of the *Homo Sapiens*, it still points to the possibility of their developing a distinct sense of identity that could lead them down the path of selfishness, sin and aggression in favour of self-preservation. In fact, their capacity for language, as simple as it is, might draw attention to their diminishing unity to a certain extent, considering how it seems to have evolved to address the increasing difficulty they find in accessing and understanding each other’s pictures and private experiences sometimes. Though these instances pale in comparison to their major dependence on picture sharing as their primary mode of communication, they still highlight an evolving construction of a private self that could reinforce the conception of distinct individuality and compromise their unique possession of an overactive empathy.

The people might not have descended into sin, corruption and savagery within the course of the novel, even after encountering evil in their aggressive invaders. However, the mere fact that they have shown readiness to higher intelligence and a need to force some pattern on their changing environment that would make it understandable seem to point to the possibility that had they not been annihilated by their invaders, they might have been forced to embrace change no matter how immoral it may have seemed. This desire to understand is

represented in Lok's discovery of 'like' or metaphorical language, a device which initially proves useful in helping him 'grasp the white-faced hunters with a hand, [and] put them into a world where they were thinkable' (194-5). Nevertheless, although 'like' aids Lok in developing an understanding of the new people by linking their aggressive nature to the dangers of the fire, the fall and the river, it still holds the threat of allowing the construction of the notions of sin, punishment and evil as elements by which he could attain some semblance of control over the madness that has disrupted the serenity of the island.

Moreover, Fa's inability to reconcile the evil she has witnessed with her tribe's conception of Oa, and her subsequent conclusion that 'Oa did not bring [the new people] out of her belly' is equally if not more dangerous in that it signals her readiness to dehumanize, maybe even demonize, other beings if their existence does not fit in with her worldview (173). Of course, Fa is justified in her exclusion of the new people from a world where all living things are mothered by a loving and benign goddess. The fact that she begins exhibiting such a tendency, however, not only signals an evolving existential need to account for evil through the development of concepts such as sin, but also manifests the obvious affinity that her belief system would have eventually developed to modern religions, in general, and Christianity, in particular.

All of these aspects help reinforce the possibility that complex intelligence might have been within the people's reach long before their encounter with evil, making the arrival of the Homo Sapiens more of a catalyst that hastens their cognitive development than a Satanic agent that tempts them into a new 'fearsome and exciting' world of sin and corruption (139). They can also help foreground the principle of biological continuity, not only by showing how the hostile Homo Sapiens came to maintain some of the instinctual empathic tendencies of the moral Neanderthals, but also by highlighting how the seeds of modern day aggression might just as well be located in an Edenic existence of purity and sinlessness. These arguments will prove vital to targeting Golding's somewhat favourable depiction of children in *Free Fall*, especially since it shows Golding as similarly preoccupied with locating the problem of the fall in a later stage of cognitive development. However, before this complex issue of becoming is tackled, it is important first to develop an understanding of the gripping matter of being, through both an evolutionary and existential frame, by targeting man's elemental narcissism in *Pincher Martin*.

CHAPTER 3

Pincher Martin and Man's Basic Narcissism

Twenty-five hundred years of history have not changed man's basic narcissism. ... It is one of the meaner aspects of narcissism that we feel that practically everyone is expendable except ourselves. We should feel prepared ... to recreate the whole world out of ourselves even if no one else existed. The thought frightens us; we don't know how we could do it without others—yet at bottom the basic resource is there: we could suffice alone if need be ... Our organism is ready to fill the world all alone, even if our mind shrinks at the thought. This narcissism is what keeps men marching into point-blank fire in wars: at heart one doesn't feel that *he* will die, he only feels sorry for the man next to him.

Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death*.⁷⁹

Is it possible for consciousness and our unique sense of identity to survive after death? If the theological notion of hell is real, how would it look for someone who did not believe in it? 'What happens to somebody who exercises his free will and goes on exercising it' even after death? (Golding in Biles, *Talk* 77). Such are the kind of questions that drove the construction of Golding's third creation, *Pincher Martin*, a book which though it echoes *Lord of the Flies* and *The Inheritors* in its thematic concerns and some of its stylistic trends, is still regarded as representing Golding's most religious and existential engagement with human nature (Clements 71; Carey, *Golding* 201, 204-5). The novel basically depicts the solitary struggle of a naval lieutenant, on a barren rock in the North Atlantic Ocean, against the looming threat of death, madness and the natural elements, following his apparent survival of a shipwreck that renders most of his crewmen dead. However, as familiar as the castaway's plight may sound in light of the common plot patterns usually seen in survivalist fiction, Christopher

⁷⁹ P. 2.

Martin's predicament remains unique in that it communicates a purgatorial struggle for the purpose of addressing the metaphysical questions of consciousness, being, and the nature of reality. The novel, in other words, is a detailed imaginative construction of a nightmarish post-mortem experience, involving the disintegrating consciousness of a person who had in life, the text intimates, proven to be quite despicable on almost every level imaginable. As a result, it may be regarded as harbouring Golding's first extensive engagement with metafictionality, the representational capacities of art and the problematic distortion of reality, in addition to an exceptionally powerful and unique statement on the fall of man and the moral condition of humanity.

No definite statement was provided, of course, as to whether the novel was written as a response to an earlier text in the same manner as *Lord of the Flies* and *The Inheritors*. It seems, however, that Golding was unconsciously engaging in an experimental reversal of an earlier text, written this time by Henry Tarpell Dorling, known as Taffrail, given how Golding is reported to have only come to realize the connection between the two novels when it was made clear to him by Ian Blake (Carey, *Golding* 195). Taffrail's protagonist, much like Golding's own, is an ordinary seaman in the royal navy whose ship gets torpedoed and destroyed following a disastrous clash with the Germans in the middle of the ocean. Though he fights with all his remaining strength to gasp for air and grab onto any floating object in an instinctual struggle for survival, he ends up sharing Christopher Martin's fate of drowning in a cold, raging ocean before he even manages to take off the sea-boots that are weighing him down (Ch.11). The similarities between the two protagonists, however, do not go deeper than their seemingly sharing the unfortunate fate of drowning. Unlike Golding's Martin whose nickname 'Pincher' serves more of a symbolic function for his despicable, greedy character, Taffrail's Martin is actually a good man who 'commands his soul to his maker' and accepts the reality of death readily and without much dread or fear of what it may hold for him because he believes the compassion of death to be a better alternative to the excruciating and futile struggle for survival (Ch. 11).⁸⁰ Ironically enough, however, Taffrail's Martin's readiness to accept his fate does not actually culminate in his demise. Golding's Pincher, on the other hand, is given over to death almost from the start of the novel despite Golding's

⁸⁰ Taffrail's Pincher's struggle for survival compels him at a certain point to suspend his empathy in favour of staying alive: 'Twice was Pincher clutched round the body, but each time he fought with the mad energy of despair, and wrenched himself free of the suffocating embrace of a shipmate less lucky than himself' (Ch. 11). His lack of empathy at this particular point, though, is understandable and can actually be considered adaptive. After all, '[he] was no coward, but it was a case of each man for himself, and his desire to live was overwhelming' (Ch. 11). Golding's Pincher, on the other hand, is represented as having always preyed on people which shows that his lack of empathy is not a case of momentary suspension.

conferring on him an overwhelming desire to preserve his identity against all odds, evident in his pathological creation of an heroic illusion of endurance in a world that is grotesquely spun out of the memory of an old tooth:

His tongue felt along the barrier of his teeth—round to the side where the big ones were and the gap. He brought his hands together and held his breath. He stared at the sea and saw nothing. His tongue was remembering. It pried into the gap between the teeth and re-created the old, aching shape. It touched the rough edge of the cliff, traced the slope down, trench after trench, down towards the smooth surface where the red lion was, just above the gum—understood what was hauntingly familiar and painful about an isolated and decaying rock in the middle of the sea (*Pincher* 174).

To grant his fragile world the authenticity that could preserve it against the annihilation of the dreadful God he detests, Christopher must go to great lengths to ‘protect [the] normality’ of his world and ensure that every detail in his intelligent creation runs in accordance with the accepted laws of nature (175). His carefully laid standards result in a highly realistic but almost entirely internal construction that not only fools him into forming a delusory conviction of its validity, but also leads readers, for much of the novel, into sharing his hopeful faith in the existential authenticity and ontological reality of his world. In fact, Golding’s reliance on the stylistic device of third person omniscient narration to communicate Christopher Martin’s struggle to overcome his predicament can be said to play an important role in tempting readers into adopting Martin’s belief in the reality of his delusion, given how it appears to provide some sort of objective validity for Martin’s illusory creation (Babb 68).⁸¹ However, as the story progresses, readers become gradually acquainted with the fictitious realism of Christopher’s endurance through the presence of some unusual narrative elements that defy rational explanation and help in guiding readers to the undisputed confirmation of death provided by the two officers, Campbell and Davidson, at the end of the novel. Christopher’s nightmarish account of survival is not, of course, a near death experience that dissipates with the force of the black lightning and the annihilation of the spirit, but is more the result of his ego’s defiance against losing his identity, accepting

⁸¹ Philip Redpath offers a similar perspective. He states, however, that third person narration might also help readers arrive at the conclusion that Christopher is actually dead and that his rock experience is a post-mortem one. He explains that by drawing a comparison between *Pincher Martin* and other survival tales such as *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and *Treasure Island* (1883) where a first person narration is used. Reliance on first person narration can help indicate that the protagonist survives his predicament and goes back to civilization where he is able to write about his experience (159-60).

death and giving himself up to the timeless compassion of God. A confirmation of this conclusion and the fact that Christopher has been dead since the beginning of the novel is actually provided through Davidson's ironic observation that Christopher's death must have been quick and painless because '[he] did not even have time to kick off his seaboots.' (*Pincher* 208). Unfortunately for Golding, however, most of the critics who read the novel following its publication in 1956 failed to read Davidson's observation as such. As a result, they could not help but develop mixed opinions about the significance of the ending, in particular, and the quality of the novel as a whole.

Golding's 'gimmick' or 'trick' ending, as it was initially perceived, sparked much controversy and confusion, evident in responses such as those of M. R. Ridley and John Metcalf who considered it a reflection of the 'perverse misuse of [the] author's rare powers,' and an example of how an attempt at 'straining after differentness' can go wrong (qtd. in Carey, *Golding* 199, 201). In fact, it was Metcalf who considered *Pincher Martin* 'a wrong-headed bore' that cannot be read despite the fact that it was 'brilliantly written' (qtd. in 199). There was also C. A. Lejeune whose contemptuous dismissal of the book as a whole and its pessimistic occupation with the 'nasty' and 'horrid side' of human nature led her to the candid conclusion that Christopher's experience was 'very badly described' and that 'the most beautiful thing to [her] mind [about] the book is the wrapper' (qtd. in 200). Such negative responses, of course, were balanced by a number of positive reviews, including those of Richard Mayne and Philip Oakes, who praised Golding's originality and brilliance at handling Christopher's nightmarish ordeal, despite their reserved opinion about the way the novel ended. There were also other critics who were aware of the purgatorial aspect of Christopher's experience, but who, nevertheless, thought it vital to indicate that Golding should have "[used] his imagination" in a little more clear way' (qtd. in 200).

Following this confusion, the book came to be published in the United States under the alternative title *The Two Deaths of Christopher Martin* in an effort on the publishers' part to help communicate the fictitious realism of Christopher's experience as well as the theological, psychological and moral aspects of the novel (Baker, *Study* 32). But according to James Baker, such an alteration had proven unhelpful in keeping American critics from slipping into the same confusion as that which had beset the English. He even adds that the title inaccurately captures the core premise of the work and endows the second death with an

air of certainty ('Interview').⁸²

One can only imagine how Golding might have reacted to these critical opinions, especially since he made it clear at one point that he had gone to considerable lengths to make the basic premise of the novel and the theological aspect of the work clear enough:

I would have said that I fell over backwards making that novel explicit. I said to myself, 'Now here is going to be a novel, it's going to be a blow on behalf of the ordinary universe, which I think on the whole to be the right one, and I'm going to write it so vividly and so accurately and with such an exact programme that nobody can possibly mistake what I mean.' (qtd. in Baker, *Study* 32).

Golding might have thought it necessary to obscure the fact that Christopher dies at the beginning of the novel in order to maintain his readers' interest in Pincher Martin's predicament. After all, it seems highly unlikely for readers to go on reading, as Babb has observed, if the protagonist is explicitly and 'unambiguously' revealed to be dead on the second page of the book (68). There is also the fact that the obscurity serves better in promoting believability in Christopher's creation of the rock and his illusion of survival (68), and as such, it can be said to be vital to delivering the shock effect that Golding claims to have hoped to create with the final scene in the novel. Golding actually states in his interview with Peter Newington that he is particularly fond of shock endings because they provide an effective means of tempting readers into reading the work again, thereby highlighting the ideas and beliefs that he considers to be of a great and deep concern to him. Such a proclamation might initially be perceived as contradicting his claim to clarity, but it is important to note that the obscurity surrounding Christopher Martin's death should not have blurred the basic premise of the work. In fact, the novel's theological structure and the explicit analogy that Golding drew in relation to the biblical account of creation should have made the purgatorial aspect of Christopher's experience clear enough. It is also important to consider that by focusing on the recollections of Christopher's horrid past, Golding was actually trying to hint at the moral aspect of his protagonist's plight and the connection

⁸² In his critical study of Golding's novels, Baker indicates that the first death is the 'bodily' one occurring at the beginning of the novel and caused by Christopher's drowning (36). The second death comes with the black lightning which shatters his self-created world and puts his ego to rest (38). However, according to Terry Eagleton, we cannot be certain that Christopher's ego has ceased its struggle to maintain the identity and the world it has created (*Evil* 27). Christopher has been reduced to nothing but a pair of claws closing in on the centre of his identity in an effort to shield it from God's obliterating compassion, but no confirmation is offered as to whether the black lightning succeeds in putting Christopher's ego to rest (26-7). Golding's conclusion about Pincher not being purged of his egotism and his being reduced to a pair of claws that might let go in time seems to support Eagleton's conclusion (Baker, 'Interview').

between his selfish character and his present torment.

It seems, however, as Golding observed, that no one thought of Christopher's tortured experiences as having been brought about by his monstrosity and his refusal to let go (Carey, *Golding* 201). This, Golding maintained, is possibly because of a 'miscalculation' on his part since he wrote the book believing that people 'would have a natural interest in theology' or some 'amount of straightforward theological knowledge' that would allow them to read the work as a post-mortem purgatorial experience of a person so consumed by greed, selfishness and egotism that he is unable to simply accept the reality of his death (Biles, *Talk* 70). Christopher Hadley Martin, according to Golding:

had no belief in anything but the importance of his own life; no love, no God. Because he was created in the image of God he had a freedom of choice which he used to centre the world on himself. He did not believe in purgatory and therefore when he died it was not presented to him in overtly theological terms. The greed for life which had been the mainspring of his nature, forced him to refuse the selfless act of dying. He continued to exist separately in a world composed of his own murderous nature. His drowned body lies rolling in the Atlantic but the ravenous ego invents a rock for him to endure on. It is the memory of an aching tooth. Ostensibly and rationally he is a survivor from a torpedoed destroyer: but deep down he knows the truth. He is not fighting for bodily survival but for his continuing identity in face of what will smash it and sweep it away—the black lightning, the compassion of God. For Christopher, the Christ-bearer, has become Pincher Martin who is little but greed. Just to be Pincher is purgatory; to be Pincher for eternity is hell (qtd. in Kermode, *Puzzles* 208).

Christopher Martin's recollections of a horrid past should have highlighted the moral and purgatorial aspects of his experience. But Golding's critics might have failed to take note of the connection between the wickedness revealed in Christopher's memories and his present suffering, and might have failed, as such, in perceiving his torment as warranted or deserved. The notion can also be said to have been further obscured by the fact that Christopher is unable to make the connection himself, choosing to view his present situation as more of a testament to his heroism in challenging an unjust God rather than accept it as proof of his monstrosity and lack of a moral sensibility (Baker, *Study* 43-4). This would make Christopher, as Baker observed, a Miltonic Satan who is so gripped by pride that he would rather create and rule his own hell than submit to the authority and compassion of a higher

power (40). As a result, he is unable to repent or express guilt and remorse over his past actions, preferring instead to play creator and agonize over the construction of his monstrous world for six days before he confronts God on the seventh and loses control over his fragile creation. What makes it possible for Christopher to act in such a manner and turn away from God is the fact that he is capable of free will. And although Golding does not specify the exact moment when Christopher ‘chose’ to go morally astray, Golding’s allusion to the woman in the cellar seems to trace Christopher’s fear and rejection of God to his childhood.⁸³

The terror that is the woman in the cellar is a recurring nightmare that Golding shared with his protagonist Christopher Martin; but while it is nothing but a nightmare to little Golding, it serves a much deeper function in the novel. It captures mankind’s fear of the irrational and their desperate attempt to counter that terror through denying the existence of what defies the imposition of rationality and the human will (Baker, *Study* 43; Baker ‘Interview’; Biles, *Talk* 75-6). As a result, man, with his freedom of choice, is tempted to turn away from God into the sinfulness of egotism, leaving God with what Golding believes to be a paradox of sorts, because although God is supposedly capable of preventing man from turning away from him, his stripping man of his freedom means reducing man to a being that would no longer be in God’s image (Biles, *Talk* 76-7). This would help establish *Pincher Martin* as a perfect precursor to *Free Fall* where Golding attempts to pinpoint the exact moment when man, through exercise of his free will, turns away from God and loses his childhood innocence. It also helps show the novel as sharing the religious overtones and preoccupations of its predecessors *Lord of the Flies* and *The Inheritors*, given how it exhibits its creator’s ongoing concern with the fall of humanity and its inherent sinfulness. Despite the theological aspect of the work, however, there seemed to be a good number of scholastic efforts that were not dedicated to solely regarding the work as a religious novel. In fact, there might have been something of a growing tendency to read *Pincher Martin* in light of the phenomenological and existential philosophies of Sartre, Heidegger and Husserl, given the work’s preoccupation with the elusive notions of free will, and its engagement with matters of alienation, isolation and death (Surette; L. Whitehead). One might even maintain that existential interpretations might have been particularly tempting, considering their persistence in past and modern scholarly efforts, in spite of Golding’s denial of having been influenced by any of these philosophical trends (Baker, *Study* 39; L. Whitehead; Biles,

⁸³ See the notes that Golding jotted prior to writing the novel in Carey, *Golding* 194.

Talk 75).⁸⁴ Such existential or commonsensical readings, states Baker, are to be considered a ‘gross misinterpretation’ of the book, made possible by the age’s literary production along with its preoccupation with existential writings which ‘conditioned’ critics to interpret literary creations in a certain light (*Study 39*). After all, Golding’s exploration of the fall and the notion of freedom of choice is mainly theological, which would make Christopher’s plight primarily moral. But by shifting the interpretive frame to existentialism, Christopher’s delusion of heroism and his struggle to overcome his ‘unjust’ predicament become actualities (40). This would result, according to Baker, in:

[erasing] the essential ironies Golding went out of his way to inject; and, if these are taken away, the theme is hopelessly obscured. Perverse in the extreme, Christopher Martin’s soul tries to survive on its own terms, and it pays for this conceit by perpetuating the misery it knew in life. ... Pincher’s ‘heroism,’ therefore, is fundamentally absurd, and so the fable ends by inverting the existential formula certain of the critics wished to impose upon it. Instead of depicting the assault of reality on the hapless soul of a rational man, Golding shows the outrageous attack of a rational man, who is far more sick than heroic, upon nature and God (40).

Golding’s interest in questions that have long been associated with the realm of existential inquiries might explain why his novels are claimed ‘seemingly’ to have much in common with existentialism, and why the idea of the fall in *Pincher Martin* took on an existential dimension rather than a theological one. Moreover, the lack of what Golding notes as a ‘natural interest’ in theological knowledge among his generation seems to have created a marked preference for rational rather than biblical readings, despite his explicit disapproval of rationalism (in Biles, *Talk 70*). Golding’s employment of the dramatic shift in perspective, for instance, was used in more than one novel; but it seems to have been particularly controversial in *Pincher Martin* presumably because it obliges critics to entertain the idea that it is possible for a person’s consciousness to exist even after the body decays and dies (Surette). Of course, most critics nowadays acknowledge Golding’s claim about the book as mainly depicting the purgatorial experience of a despicable protagonist

⁸⁴ Examples of these efforts are Margaret Walters’ ‘Two Fabulists: Golding and Camus’ and Ted E. Boyle’s ‘Golding’s Existential Vision’. However, according to Surette, the most logical existential exploration of *Pincher Martin* can be said to be that of Lee Whitehead. It was Whitehead who found Golding’s work to be particularly reminiscent of the existential and phenomenological ideas of Sartre, Heidegger, and Husserl. He notes, however, that although Whitehead succeeds to a certain extent in presenting a logical argument regarding Golding’s possible familiarity with such existential views, he fails to note that the features he locate are also shared by philosophical and religious treatises across the ages.

who refuses to admit to himself that he is indeed dead, but such was not the case when the novel was first published (Surette). There were critical views in support of a more commonsensical reading of the plot, claiming an interpretation that entertains the common belief that a person's entire life can flash before his or her eyes when they approach death (Baker, *Study* 37; Carey, *Golding* 196; Surette). In fact, it is highly possible that such a tendency was encouraged by the noted similarity between Golding's *Pincher Martin* and Ambrose Bierce's short story *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* (1890) since it shows its main character as conjuring a whole scenario of managing to escape hanging in the brief moment that precedes his death (Babb 66).⁸⁵ Consequently, Christopher Martin's ordeal had come to be considered as more the result of a drowning man's hallucinations rather than the outcome of a post-mortem egotistical insistence on maintaining identity, even if it meant spinning and suffering a hellish nightmare. However, Babb notes that as appealing as this rational interpretation may be, it remains somewhat lacking, considering how it not only downplays the importance of Christopher's highly egotistical self, but also neglects the fact that he is always struggling to overlook and suppress the dormant knowledge that he is dead (66). Moreover, Baker states that adopting a commonsensical reading of the novel poses a number of problems, one of which is the fact that by denying Christopher's purgatorial experience, critics and readers alike would come to ally themselves with the rational officer Davidson whose logical conclusion that Christopher did not suffer because of his quick death is highly ironic in light of the painful ordeal that Christopher has evidently gone through prior to being annihilated (37). Entertaining such a reading might also require considering the possibility that Christopher's suffering is likely to have been an extension of the brief moment of time that it took him to die, thereby suggesting that although his hallucinations seem painful and excruciating, they are not as prolonged and awful as they are made to appear (37). As a result, adopting such a reading, according to Baker, not only solidifies the 'trick' and 'gimmick' claims made against Golding, but also obscures the highly theological structure of the novel as well as downplays its moral implications (37).

Golding was initially insistent upon establishing the point that Christopher's ordeal is a post-mortem experience. He went out of his way to lay down the basic premise of the novel

⁸⁵ Some have even suggested, as in the case of Hilary Corke, that Golding removes the last line where it is made perfectly clear that Christopher dies at the second page of the book, but Golding believes that there is not a single element or line that he would think of as 'irrelevant' to communicating his basic premise, and that asking him to remove that line is like asking him 'to take something that was stood on its head and put it the right way up again' (Golding in Biles, *Talk* 69-70). He also adds that '[t]he whole point of the book is that it was stood on its head. [Corke] is, I suppose, a straightforward twentieth-century humanist, and this is not what I am, I don't think, and this isn't what the book is about. No, I wouldn't change the ending' (70-1).

on more than one occasion (Carey, *Golding* 196; in Newington; Baker 'Interview'). However, his resistance to the age's preoccupation with textual autonomy and its disregard of authorial intentions eventually softened, leading him to adopt the more flexible view that 'what is in a book is not what the author thought he put in, but what the reader gets out of it' (in Biles, *Talk* 58). He also adds that it is highly possible for one to get 'contrasting interpretations' and that he is aware that '[there] comes a point of reading in. ... If the story has any validity, any three-dimensional quality, then it must be susceptible to multiple interpretations. If it only had just one great message, why not write out the great message and not bother about writing the novel?' (58). Such proclamations might prove sufficient in justifying different approaches and interpretations to the novel. Still, in order to present a more compelling argument for exploring *Pincher Martin* through a rational scope, critical objections to attempts at breaking out of the theological mould and to imposing commonsensical and existential readings need to be first addressed in detail.

In 'Literary Sources and William Golding', Jack Biles notes what seems to be a common tendency among Golding's critics, and that is of engaging in attempts at tracing the possible sources that might have been particularly influential in shaping Golding's fiction. Such attempts, though tempting, states Biles, should not be the focus of critical pursuits because whatever connections critics may find between Golding's books and other sources are highly likely to be coincidental, and as such, mostly fallacious, particularly when considered in light of Golding's affirmation of the fact that his books 'have very little genesis outside [himself]' (qtd. in Biles, 'Sources'). Setting aside Bloomian anxiety of influence, one possible reason why critics find the endeavour compelling enough is the high probability of their detecting certain undeniable similarities between Golding's novels and other literary creations, and sometimes even certain philosophical and psychological trends. As a result, they have not only become so adamant in insisting on proving a Freudian, Calvinist or existential influence on Golding's texts, but also ended up drawing an association between Golding's novels and some other prominent fictional productions such as Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) and Hughes' *A High Wind in Jamaica* (1929), in spite of Golding's denial of having read these works prior to writing his novels (Biles, 'Sources'; Baker, 'Interview'). According to Golding, such conclusions are highly logical in the sense that they provide a confirmation of the notion that 'if people engage in writing about humanity, they're likely in certain circumstances to see something the same thing' and that 'it would really be very surprising if there weren't literary parallels to be drawn between this book and that,' especially if these books are engaged in addressing the same issues and concerns (Keating

194-5).

Both twentieth-century existentialism as an already established literary and philosophical movement and Golding's novels appeared to constitute reactions to the horrendous events of the Second World War; both, therefore, were brought about in response to similar concerns and moral interests erupting out of the same set of social, cultural and political circumstances. This might help explain the existential overtones in Golding's novels, and why it is wrong to attempt to trace these ideas to one particular source or writer, especially considering how they might owe more to Golding's interest in Judeo-Christian theology rather than a particular existential source. After all, most, if not all, religions revolve around components that can be said to have evolved to address certain existential concerns and questions in one way or another (Batson and Stocks 145). Consequently, one should not be quick to dismiss an existential reading because Golding's interest in theological matters does not pose a major hindrance to carrying it, nor does it provide a solid basis for rejecting it altogether. One should also not succumb to the common misconception that the two schemes contradict one another, nor should one exclude the possibility of Judeo-Christian theology being one of the early roots of modern existential thought, in addition to classical philosophy and Greek tragedy which Golding confessed to having read and admired.⁸⁶

One final problem that should be addressed if a rational or existential reading is to be pursued is that of denying or downplaying the mythical component of the novel associated with the biblical account of the fall (George 26). From this perspective, man's sinful state will no longer be defined in terms of a 'rupture' in the bond between God and man, but will instead be traced to the evolutionary conditions that resulted in the creation of human identity, and in the emergence of selfishness, aggression and what Huxley is presumed to have defined as an 'innate inability to live a proper and satisfactory life in a social circumstance' (George 26; Baker, 'Interview'). It is important to stress, however, that Golding did not object to commonsensical and rational interpretations of the fall and original sin as evident in his response to Julian Huxley; nor did he solely rely on the biblical understanding of these notions in his exploration of the sinful condition of man, especially in *Lord of the Flies* and *The Inheritors*. By taking the commonsensical approach, Christopher's post-mortem experience will be addressed as near death hallucinations resulting out of a dormant existential death anxiety that is normally considered the unique price that humanity must pay for the evolution and attainment of high intelligence, self-awareness and

⁸⁶ See Baker, 'Interview'; Carey, *Golding* 221; Carey, 'Talks' 182-3; Lewis.

rationality.⁸⁷ Consequently, developing an evolutionary existential reading might result in diminishing the theological aspect of the work in favour of a more rational understanding of Christopher's sinful state. Such an interpretation, however, will not rob the work of its moral significance and make an existential hero out of Christopher Martin and his pathological delusion of survival. On the contrary, it will still highlight the illusion of biological progress and grant more credence to the rational concept of the evolutionary fall that Golding had first targeted in *Lord of the Flies*, and which he later came to explore extensively in *The Inheritors*.⁸⁸

The Pathologies and Anxieties of the Self-aware Animal

When addressing a question on the rise of Nazism and its horrendous crimes against humanity, Golding emphatically indicated that the problem should not be narrowly defined in relation to Nazis in particular. He maintained that whatever evil the Germans were capable of back then could so easily have been replicated by any nation, group or race on the face of the earth if the right historical conditions presented themselves (in Biles, *Talk* 36-9). Since the problem basically lies in our inherent sinfulness and our biological propensity for violence, aggression and selfishness, we all hold the potential for succumbing to our innate aggressive drives in one way or another (38). Such a position, especially when taken in relation to *Lord of the Flies* where man is depicted as 'a morally deceased' animal, may initially be perceived as bleak and pessimistic (Baker, 'Interview'). It should be noted, however, that the problem of evil in Golding's fiction is not as deterministic, simple and straightforward as it may seem. Evil is not always consciously and intentionally pursued for the sake of gratifying some monstrous instinct that makes it possible to take pleasure in the suffering and misfortune of others, but can sometimes be more of an outcome of a momentary lapse of judgement or a desire to pursue good in the wrong way. This can be said to be clearly manifested in the new people in *The Inheritors* whose attempts at annihilating the gentle Neanderthals, as

⁸⁷ See Becker, *Death* 26-7; Solomon, Greenberg and Pyszczynski 18; Landau et al.

⁸⁸ This reading may initially seem to be more in line with the post-structuralist disregard for authorial intentions since it replaces Golding's theological understanding of the fall of man with an existential and commonsensical one. It should be stressed, though, that despite Golding's sole reliance on theology in communicating the moral condition of his despicable protagonist, *Pincher Martin* can still be considered a perfect example of a pathological extreme of the possession of self-awareness which Golding considers to be one of the biological roots of our sinful state (Baker, 'Interview'). Of course, there is always the option of exploring the novel as an outcome of Golding's traumatic war experience and his existential need to account for mankind's capacity for evil, violence and aggression. This way it will not demand overlooking the supernatural and theological elements that Golding intended to highlight in *Pincher Martin*. However, employing an evolutionary existential approach can not only connect Pincher Martin's plight to the biological roots of evil previously explored in *The Inheritors*, but can also highlight a rational dimension to Golding's novels that is normally overshadowed by the theological scheme.

aggressive and merciless as they seem, are shown to be mainly driven by the instincts of fear and self-preservation rather than depicted as an outcome of an utter monstrosity. In fact, Golding clearly states that some of the new people's actions are actually meant to communicate their awareness of the moral implications of their aggressive behaviour in addition to their capacity to experience guilt over wrong deeds, even if they are directed at the ogre-like beings whose mere existence is seen as a major source of threat (in Biles, *Talk* 111).⁸⁹ In other words, human nature to Golding is not only innately evil, but also instinctually and paradoxically moral. This might explain why the boys in *Lord of the Flies* and the new people in *The Inheritors* are not shown to be particularly evil at first, but are eventually placed in the kind of conditions that compel them to rely on their 'dark side,' free their 'deficiencies' and act on their prejudices, fears and violent drives (44, 34).

When it comes to *Pincher Martin*, however, Golding seems to have taken Christopher to an extreme that is markedly different from the Everyman characterization common in most of his fictional creations. Unlike his ancestors in *The Inheritors*, Christopher's antagonism and aggression are not brought about by overwhelming conditions of fear and anxiety that overpower the instinctually moral in his nature, but are more the result of a repulsive, yet not uncommon, extreme where evil appears to be pursued for its own sake. Golding actually magnifies this aspect of Christopher's character in an interview with Frank Kermode by stating that Christopher is 'fallen more than most,' and that he 'went out of [his] way to damn Pincher as much as [he] could by making him the nastiest type [he] could think of' (qtd. in Baker, *Study* 39). What Golding reveals to his readers through Martin's flashbacks is not an ordinary man struggling for survival, but an excessively selfish, covetous, self-centred character whose nightmarish delusions of a persecuting God merely highlight his dormant awareness of the monstrosity of his nature. Most of Christopher's crimes, of course, are not at the same level of intensity as that of the bloody rituals of the new people in *The Inheritors* or the children in *Lord of the Flies*. However, what marks Christopher's crimes as particularly repulsive is the fact that they are pursued within the context of civilization and yet without any regard to the moral laws or the social codes of conduct that govern the realm which he occupies. There is also the worrying fact that Christopher is never once shown as capable of

⁸⁹ One example that Golding mentions in support of this notion is that of offering Tanakil to the Neanderthals in exchange for Liku. Though it was more of a cruel act of self-preservation, the fact that they have resorted to such a measure shows that they are aware at some level of the moral implications of the cannibalistic ritual that involved Liku and that they are actually gripped by guilt over it. According to Golding, Homo Sapiens 'propitiate because they have done something they know is at the very least against this kind of creature; they've eaten this girl, and eating a girl is a powerful affair' (in Biles, *Talk* 111).

taking moral responsibility for his actions, or of at least expressing guilt, shame or remorse over his unjust exploitation of those around him. This intensifies his affinity with the extreme margin that takes pleasure in the ‘crunch’ when it ‘clout[s] somebody over the head’ (Golding in Biles, *Talk* 47). It also marks him as a clear violation of Golding’s belief of how human nature is supposed to show its ‘bright side,’ even if it happens to be less balanced and more inherently predisposed to seek evil, so long as it remains integrated into a social system that governs its selfish and aggressive tendencies (44, 47). But why is it that Christopher is caught in this monstrous pincher condition that he is in?

Golding’s notes actually raise the exact same question, a matter that further reinforces Christopher’s unique moral state in comparison to Golding’s earlier characterizations of human nature. However, both the surviving notes and Pincher Martin’s flashbacks offer no clear answer as to why Christopher is the way he is or even pinpoint the exact moment when ‘he went wronger than most’ (qtd. in Carey, *Golding* 194). There is, of course, a clear mention of mankind’s capacity for freedom of choice and its subsequent tendency to centre the world on itself and to turn away from God. But it seems that even Golding believes the root cause of Christopher’s moral condition to be of a much more complex nature since he clearly states in his notes that ‘running away from God... is no answer,’ and that there must have been a point in Christopher’s life that made the conversion to the permanent extremes of evil possible as opposed to the transient phases of aggression that Golding’s earlier characters underwent (qtd. in 194). One speculation that this reading could offer in light of the evolutionary understanding of the fall is that Christopher represents a narcissistic obsession with the self that could be regarded as evolutionarily recent given how it involves complex cognitive constructions of identity considered to be uniquely human (Holtzman and Strube 212). This obsession, of course, does not explicitly manifest itself in his flashbacks, nor does it seem to be playing much of a role in his past immoral acts that continue to invade his favourable delusion of survival on the rock. It does, however, reveal itself rather clearly in his present rationalizations which he utilizes in order to ward off the distressing reality of his impending death. Christopher’s past recollections are certainly important to understanding his present suffering as self-inflicted, and to consequently apprehending the moral aspect of the novel. It should be noted, though, that the connection between Christopher’s past and his present should not be solely examined in this particular direction because the content of his present hallucinations can be just as illuminating in uncovering the root cause of his moral condition and to understanding why he is the utterly selfish pincher that he is.

One of the most prominent aspects of Christopher’s delusion of survival is the manner by

which he struggles to grant meaning to his existence and to assert his identity and importance as defence mechanisms against ‘the sheer negation’ of God’s heaven or the ultimate annihilation of death (*Pincher* 70). In order to accomplish the feat of endurance, Christopher is constantly gripped by the need to convince himself throughout the entirety of the novel that he cannot die because he is too ‘precious’ to perish, and that he will eventually be rescued sooner or later if he can only devise a scheme to help him endure long enough for that desired end to happen (14, 81). He makes it clear to himself that he certainly has what it takes to survive his present predicament: health, education and most importantly, intelligence, which he seems to be particularly preoccupied with as the one quality that will allow him to adapt the rock to his ways and to overcome whatever obstacle standing in the way of the ultimate end of survival (77, 86). He also takes his present agony as proof of his heroism and fantasizes about relating his admirable account of endurance which he believes to be reason enough to earn him a promotion to lieutenant-commander or commander following his eventual rescue (88). Such positive illusions, though only unique to Christopher’s case in terms of degree, can actually be regarded as common, considering how most people share the underlying compulsion to seek favourable illusions of themselves, to think optimistically about what lies ahead and to overestimate what they are capable of, to varying extents (Austin 120, McAlister et al.). In fact, reality distortions of this sort can prove highly adaptive given how they might serve to bolster people’s faith in their abilities, grant them a sense of control and motivate them into overcoming whatever problems they may encounter, especially in situations where over-attendance to reality might result in negativity, hopelessness and loss of motivation (Austin 121). There is also the fact that given the complexity of human consciousness and the subsequent awareness of the problematic and terrifying reality of death, its process and ramifications, there would be evident benefit in seeking a meaningful worldview that helps define identity, grant importance to people’s existence, boost their self-esteem and promote favourable illusions of what they ought to be or how they should be perceived by others.⁹⁰ People are even capable of judging and holding certain opinions concerning the way they look and the manner by which they carry themselves which is but one of the many traits that not only mark the human race at a distinctively complex level above that of the animals, but also makes them, as de Waal has noted, the most narcissistic species on the face of the planet (*Good Natured* 96).

The claim that we are most likely in possession of what can only be described as

⁹⁰ See Solomon, Greenberg and Pyszczynski 22; De Waal, *Good Natured* 96.

narcissistic and self-serving tendencies as an inevitable consequence of the development of the human level of self-awareness and the creation of individual identity may initially seem off-putting. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that for people to possess some degree of narcissism is considered to be not only normal but also highly adaptive. A moderate level of 'self-regard,' after all, is closely associated with the development of self-preservation and the healthy expression and pursuit of personal interests without transgressing against others or violating their rights as people entitled to their needs and aspirations (McAlister et al.; Ronningstam 45-6).⁹¹ It is also considered vital for the development of a healthy measure of empathy and double-mindedness that does not lead one to excessive selfishness, or a maladaptive expression of altruism that could result in the constant disregard of the self for the sake of others (Baron-Cohen 91-2, 181). In fact, healthy narcissism can be said to play an important role in the dimming or the momentary suspension of empathy in certain conditions that call for aggression, or in circumstances in which failure to prioritize personal needs might result in diminishing an individual's chances of survival and reproductive success.⁹² Such is actually the case for the new people whose self-centeredness, as repulsive as it may initially seem, particularly when drawn in comparison to the selflessness of the highly empathic Neanderthals, is shown to be one of the very fundamental aspects of human nature that has made it possible for humanity to survive and replace the gentler species as the inheritors of the earth.

However, tracing Christopher Martin's moral state to the same root cause of his ancestors' moral ailment or the mere cognitive operation of the self-serving bias might result in oversimplifying his condition and in overlooking the psychological factors that are particular to his case. Christopher, for one thing, exhibits a clear lack of moral compass, evident in his incapacity to express guilt or experience shame over the very same past acts that continue to haunt him on the rock. There is also the fact that despite his vivid recollections of the crimes he has committed, he refuses to acknowledge his mistakes in ways one might expect from a dying man, or even consider a morally logical connection between his horrid past and his present suffering. In fact, Christopher prefers to go on entertaining a delusion of false heroism, choosing to view his self-induced agony as having been brought about by an

⁹¹ It has been indicated that possessing positive illusions about the self is actually adaptive. However, there is an 'optimal margin' for how much distortion of reality is allowed (McAlister et al.). If individuals over-distort or under-distort, their tendencies might cease to be adaptive and might turn maladaptive instead. Those who under-distort maintain an overly too realistic perspective which, contrary to common opinion, is believed to be maladaptive. Those who over-distort, like narcissists, might be blinded by their self-serving bias into developing an exaggerated and unrealistic perception of themselves and their capacities (McAlister et al.).

⁹² See Baron-Cohen 181; Ronningstam 45-6; Diamond, Yeomans and Levy 423-4; Becker, *Death* 2.

oppressive and unjust god whose tyranny is to be admirably challenged at all costs, rather than consider the possibility of divine retribution. What is more is that in his pathological effort to maintain a heroic image of himself, Christopher conveniently chooses to overlook the last crime he committed against his one and only friend, seconds before the ship was hit by a German torpedo. He decides to focus instead on the fact that had he not hesitated to carry the order ‘hard a-starboard’ sooner—in order to have the *Wildebeest* turn suddenly and hopefully throw Nat off the ship in the process—he would have become a hero for saving the ship from the torpedo that brought it down (*Pincher* 186). Such greed for admiration and idolization is mirrored in Christopher’s desire to maintain a grandiose self-image in his past through the pursuit of status or the conquest of ‘anything he can lay his hands on the best part, the best seat, the most money, the best notice, the best woman’ (120). In fact, it is through Christopher’s superior Pete that Golding first makes his clear reference to his protagonist’s self-centredness and moral bankruptcy given the manner by which Pete associates Christopher with the seven deadly sins, particularly greed and pride, which he believes Christopher to be capable of playing ‘without a mask,...just stylized makeup’ (119). Such qualities are, of course, not unique to the despicable Christopher Martin. It should be noted, however, that Golding might have wanted to target an exceptionally reprehensible state of sinful self-centredness through the creation of Christopher given the association drawn between pride and greed and their being manifested as an extreme, evident in Pete’s belief that it is ‘Greed’ that should make the acquaintance with the egotistical *Pincher*: ‘Think you can play Martin, Greed?’ (120).⁹³

Christopher’s sins, in other words, might be more of a symptom associated with one of those instances when mankind’s inherent egotistical tendencies take on a pathological manifestation, leading to an overinflated image of the self that sets up unrealistic standards and expectations of what that self is entitled to and how it should be treated by others. In fact, Golding clearly communicates such a notion, first through Christopher’s heroic delusion of survival, and later through his obsession with his identity, evident in his reasoning for desiring to kill Nat, which he shamelessly and blatantly traces to not wanting to ‘lose his identity’ (*Pincher* 184).⁹⁴ Golding also maintains in an interview with Baker that Christopher

⁹³ Pride, after all, involves the deification of the self, and greed is more of a symptom of such a state, considering how it prioritizes fulfilling the self’s needs at the expense of others.

⁹⁴ Nat, after all, is the only person, along with Mary Lovell, to challenge Christopher’s superiority and his favourable view of himself, and though not intentionally perpetrated, his ending up with the one woman who rejected Christopher’s advances is what fuels Christopher’s jealousy and sets him on the path of murder for the first time. This will be explained in detail shortly.

is more of an 'egotist...than most,' a statement which further aids in reinforcing Golding's earlier conception of him as the most fallen of all his characters (Golding in Baker, *Study* 39; 'Interview'), rivalled only by his later creation of the psychopathic Sophie in *Darkness Visible*. This would place Christopher on the pathological end of the narcissism continuum, making his condition, unlike that of his ancestors, one of the perfect examples of how the evolution of self-awareness and the creation of individual identity can take on a morbid manifestation or result in an extreme of permanent malignancy.

Since a healthy measure of narcissism is usually associated with the healthy expression and suspension of empathy, a pathological extreme will result in not only a dysfunctional sense of identity, but also an abhorrent state of 'single-mindedness,' whereby it is difficult to maintain emotional empathy or relate to others as human beings (See Baron-Cohen 16; Pincus and Roche 32). In fact, it is highly possible for narcissists, given their intact possession of cognitive empathy, to use their Machiavellian intelligence for the selfish manipulation and exploitation of others if this means gratifying their desire for status and social dominance, and if it promotes their chances of attaining more power and success (Wallace 314; Tracy et al. 337-8). Such a tendency can actually be detected in the way Christopher is represented as putting on an act of humility and patriotism in order to be recommended for a commission in the navy (*Pincher* 94), or in the manner by which he sweet talks Helen into carrying on an affair with him in the hopes that it would improve his status in his acting career. The fact that Christopher's primary profession is that of actor further reinforces the theme of narcissism, reflecting his excessive need for admiration and his readiness to put on a false front to exploit and manipulate those around him. His conquest of women, in particular, is significant, considering how sexual exploitations are generally regarded as a reflection of one's thirst for dominance and control, a theme which Golding later explores extensively in *Free Fall* through Sammy's sexual exploitation of the simple Beatrice, and in *The Pyramid* (1967) through Oliver's relationship with the socially inferior Evie.⁹⁵ Christopher's victimization of women is also significant in that it is represented as providing him with more assurance 'in his knowledge of the cosmic nature of eating' and in his existence as a successful maggot (89).

⁹⁵ This can actually be seen in Christopher's encounter with Helen where he states that she is 'not a person, [but]...an instrument of pleasure' (*Pincher* 95). It also shows in the manner by which Christopher threatens Mary into letting him have his way with her (151-2). Golding clearly states in his notes, that for someone who desires power like Christopher, life 'means power over things and power over the most expensive things called women' (qtd. in Carey, *Golding* 194). Such a statement is actually in accordance with the observation that it is normal for narcissists to think of sex in terms of dominance, 'manipulation and power,' to develop 'misogynistic tendencies' and to engage in 'coercive and sadistic sexual behavior' (Holtzman and Strube 214).

Golding's referring to Christopher as a maggot perfectly captures Christopher's life as an excessively egotistical, self-aware animal whose habit of eating and exploiting others in order to move ahead, regardless of moral implications, is fundamental to his narcissistic nature. It is important to note, though, that Golding's reliance on the Chinese box metaphor does not simply serve the function of analogy, but also communicates what Christopher genuinely believes life to be like since he is constantly shown as obsessing over not wanting to be 'eaten' or to fall victim to other people's predatory habits the same way they have fallen for his (157). Life to Christopher, after all, is a Chinese box where maggots are crawling about with no other choice but to prey on one another to survive, making the 'whole business of eating... peculiarly significant' since 'eating with the mouth,' as Christopher puts it, '[is] only a gross expression of what was a universal process. You could eat with your cock or with your fists, or with your voice. You could eat with hobnailed boots or buying and selling or marrying and begetting or cuckolding' (88). Such a conception helps reveal a paranoid dimension to Christopher's character that is then projected onto those around him the same way the new people projected their capacity for aggression on the innocent forest dwellers. It also shows Christopher as prone to delusions of persecution and as living in a hell of his own making long before he is cast away on a rock in the middle of the Atlantic to suffer the questionable grace of a seemingly antagonistic god.

One might argue that even though Christopher manages to fool himself into believing that it does not bother him to live in accordance with the consequences of his selfish and immoral choices (71), there seem to be moments when Christopher is shown as forced to reconsider his decisions, assess the impact of his past actions and confront the ramifications of his unjust exploitation of others. An example of that presents itself rather late in the novel when the realization of how lonely it is to endure on a barren rock in the middle of the ocean finally takes its toll on him and forces him to relive the time when he became something of a social outcast through no one's fault but his own (181). However, despite Christopher's clear admission that it is because of what he did that he is 'an outsider and alone' (181), phrasing his confession in this manner seems to be more of an expression of frustration at how his choices have affected him than a manifestation of concern for those whom he victimized. Christopher, after all, is never once shown as exhibiting any interest in making amends or in asking for forgiveness, an aspect that helps highlight his confession as less of a sign of a guilty conscience and more of a clue to an abhorrent state of single-mindedness and an

inability to empathize.⁹⁶ In fact, it is possible to see Christopher's concern as mostly directed at the loss of the narcissistic supply that used to regulate his self-esteem, feed his sense of importance and promote his delusion of grandiosity. This perfectly shows in his monologue on the rock where he expresses his desolation at losing human contact and reminisces about all the experiences and sexual conquests that granted him a sense of purpose and defined who he is to himself and those around him:

I could ... assess the impact of Christopher Hadley Martin on the world. I could find assurance of my solidity in the bodies of other people by warmth and caresses and triumphant flesh. I could be a character in a body. But now I am this thing in here, a great many aches of bruised flesh, a bundle of rags and those lobsters on the rock. The three lights of my window are not enough to identify me however sufficient they were in the world. But there were other people to describe me to myself—they fell in love with me, they applauded me, they caressed this body they defined it for me. There were the people I got the better of, people who disliked me, people who quarrelled with me. Here I have nothing to quarrel with. I'm in danger of losing definition. I am an album of snapshots, random, a whole show of trailers of old films. The most I know of my face is the scratch of bristles, an itch, a sense of tingling warmth (132-3).

Although such a confession helps in reinforcing Christopher's selfishness as a successful maggot to a certain extent, witnessing the confession delivered in such a manner, coupled with Christopher's cries of despair at having to suffer the fate of isolation on a barren rock in the middle of nowhere, is likely to move readers into feeling empathy rather than contempt. This is ironic, though, in that readers are not only brought to accept the delusion of heroism of an exploitative and grandiose narcissist, but are actually being manipulated into overlooking the fact that had it not been for his lack of a moral sensibility and his pathological obsession with his sense of identity, Christopher would not have ended up isolated and alone in a hell of his own making in the first place. As stated earlier, having the ship torpedoed at the exact same moment when Christopher gave the order to kill Nat might have been intended by Golding to highlight the moral aspect of the novel and to grant more credence to the notion of divine retribution, as opposed to the co-occurrence being merely

⁹⁶ Christopher's pathological lack of empathy does not absolve him of the moral responsibility, though. The fact that he is aware that what he had done has caused people to shun him shows that he is aware of the moral implications of his actions. This point will be tackled in detail later.

coincidental. What Babb has observed, however, is that Christopher ‘bears a heavy responsibility for the sinking of the destroyer, and so for his own death, because—in pursuing his plan to kill Nat—he has sent the port lookout below, the man who might have seen the torpedo approach’ (Babb, 93; *Pincher* 185). As a result, he is not only depicted as unable to avoid the torpedo, save himself, and possibly the lives of many others who have been on board the ship at the time, but also shown as unable to spare himself the agony of isolation and the torturing delusion of survival that eventually follow his drowning.⁹⁷

The destroyer incident, of course, is not the only example of Christopher’s tendency to focus on short-term gains, seek drastic measures, and overlook possible costs and ramifications that can be highly self-destructive, particularly in the long run. His affair with Helen, the producer’s wife, classifies as another clear example of this propensity given that he initiated the relationship for the sole purpose of using her to get ahead in his acting career, only to end up earning nothing but Pete’s antagonism and animosity. Indeed, it is because of this grave mistake that Christopher finds himself forced to abandon his profession as an actor and to enlist in the navy where he eventually meets his death. However, what makes the destroyer incident particularly revealing, aside from its being the one incident that sheds light on Christopher’s last moments as a supposedly successful maggot, is that it highlights a psychopathic dimension to his character, represented in his willingness to kill the one person who has been nothing but a friend to him simply because of the threat that his mere existence posed to Christopher’s self-image (184). Unlike Golding’s earlier characters, Christopher’s attempt to kill Nat is not a measure resorted to under circumstances of fear or terror, but is more of an outcome of his intolerance to an existence that compromises his ego and puts his own identity in question. This may seem uncharacteristic at first, even to Christopher himself, considering the low opinion that he holds of Nat, evident in the manner by which he fixates on Nat’s ‘spider-length’ (50), ‘fool innocence’ (101), ‘womanish’ demeanour and his inability to act as a seaman (50).⁹⁸ It should be noted, however, that by marrying Mary, Nat

⁹⁷ Christopher falling victim to his own murderous nature actually reveals the maladaptiveness of the pathological extreme of narcissism in Christopher’s case.

⁹⁸ It should be noted that one of the common views on why narcissists are particularly sensitive or intolerant of injuries to self-esteem is that they have constructed their grandiose self-image as a means to cover and protect their underlying damaged or low self-esteem (Vater et al.). In other words, narcissists have high explicit self-esteem, but a markedly low implicit self-esteem. The dynamics involved in these two particular aspects of the self are too complex to address here, but it should be noted that the problem basically lies in how these two aspects are brought or combined together rather than in the fact that one aspect is high while the other is low (Vater et al.). This is claimed to be the reason why narcissists are severely defensive when it comes to their self-image. However, Wallace believes that the narcissistic sensitivity to injuries to self-esteem and the likelihood of a narcissist’s engaging in aggression in defence of his self-image might be more of a sign of frustration at

has unintentionally delivered a serious blow to Christopher's ego, not only because Mary is the one woman Christopher has never been able to possess or control, but also because Christopher has apparently never considered the innocent and friendly Nat as an equal, much less a threat, capable of attaining what he could never devour or subdue. Christopher's incapacity to tolerate injuries to his self-image also shows in his attempt at and possible success in raping Mary whose existence he is also represented as having been incapable of tolerating, particularly following her rejection of him. This may actually bring the extreme Christopher is occupying closer to what could only be considered as psychopathic, especially since both conditions of psychopathy and narcissism are noted as sharing a 'grandiose sense of self-worth, callous/lack of empathy, and failure to accept responsibility for ... actions' (Lynam 227; Baron-Cohen 92; Marissen, Deen and Franken).⁹⁹ Nevertheless, to say that Christopher shares the psychopath's lack of understanding of moral responsibility, or the incapacity to note the distinction between the conventional and the moral, would be an overstatement since he is represented as clearly aware at some level that Nat, in particular, does not deserve to be antagonized and hated to such a blinding extent (*Pincher* 104-5, 103). This shows in what Babb considers as the only 'uncharacteristically' unselfish moment in Christopher's life where he is shown to be warning Nat about himself after the latter naively asks him to be his best man and to look after Mary when he dies (Babb 81; *Pincher* 157-8). The possibility that Christopher could have felt differently about antagonizing Nat might seem all the more likely given that Nat is the one person who never abandons Christopher during the time he is shown as having been overwhelmed by a sense of being a social outcast. Nat is also, ironically enough, the only person, aside from Christopher's mother, whom *Pincher* calls for help when he finds himself facing the serious threat of drowning following the torpedo incident. Despite this dormant awareness, however, Christopher cannot help but '[find] himself cursing an invisible Nat, cursing him for Mary, for the contempt in old Gin-soak's face' (102-3). Consequently, he cannot help but justify and hold on to his hatred than let go of it:

having to be constantly seeking self-aggrandizing experiences and at having these attempts thwarted rather than a sign of a fragile self-esteem (321).

⁹⁹ In fact, narcissism has been classified as one of three traits comprising what is known as the 'Dark Triad' which is basically a group of malignant traits that include psychopathy and Machiavellianism and that is supposed to designate 'a socially malevolent character with behavior tendencies toward self-promotion, emotional coldness, duplicity, and aggressiveness' (Paulhus and Williams). It has even been claimed that antisocial personality disorder could possibly be a 'subtype' of narcissistic personality disorder (Marissen, Deen and Franken).

The centre, looking in this reversed world over the binnacle, found itself beset by a storm of emotions, acid and inky and cruel. There was a desperate amazement that anyone so good as Nat, so unwillingly loved for the face that was always rearranged from within, for the serious attention, for love given without thought, should also be so quiveringly hated as though he were the only enemy. There was amazement that to love and to hate were now one thing and one emotion. Or perhaps they could be separated. Hate was as hate had always been, an acid, the corroding venom of which could be borne only because the hater was strong.

‘I am a good hater’ (103).

This same love-hate dynamic can also be said to underlie Christopher’s relationship with Mary who seems, through no fault of her own, to be more hated by Christopher than Nat, given how he clearly admits at one point to have held no feelings towards her except those of hate (149). However, as he tries to understand what it is about her existence that made him develop an obsession with her to the point where he actually contemplates killing her, he considers the possibility that he, too, might be in love with her, but is, nevertheless, still being eaten by the same corroding ‘acid’ of hate that fuels his antagonism to Nat:

Ever since I met her and she interrupted the pattern, coming at random, obeying no law of life, facing me with the insoluble, unbearable problem of her existence the acid’s been chewing at my guts. I can’t even kill her because that would be her final victory over me. Yet as long as she lives the acid will eat. She’s there. In the flesh. In the not even lovely flesh. In the cheap mind. Obsession. Not love. Or if love, insanely compounded of this jealousy of her very being. Odi et amo. (103-4).

This may help to reveal Christopher’s distorted perception of love, especially when examined in relation to his admission to loving Nat against his very nature before he finally decides to give the order that was supposed to kill him (184). There is more to this confession, however, than highlighting the possibility of his incapacity to love or revealing the depth of his antagonism to the very same people whom he believes that he held some semblance of affection towards at a certain point in his life. Christopher has clearly stated that he is jealous of Mary’s ‘very being’ (103). He also seems to have indirectly admitted to harbouring the same emotion towards Nat when he stated that he is ‘additionally furious’ with him, ‘not because of Mary...but because he dared sit so, tilting with the sea, held by a thread, so near the end that would be at once so anguishing and restful like the bursting of a boil’ (101).

What Nat and Mary might have done to Christopher, aside from threatening his sense of importance, is that they have shown him through their benevolent existence the meaninglessness of his own and the stark emptiness of ‘running after [his] identity disc all the days of [his] life’ (193). Christopher, after all, has never cared about maintaining a meaningful engagement with life or sustaining honest and reliable relations as much as he has cared about getting ahead and fulfilling his every need, desire and ambition even as that has involved exploiting and stepping on others. This leaves him envious of those who are, contrary to him, capable of finding a sense of purpose. Though he chooses not to admit that to himself seeing that this would confer no advantage in maintaining his self-image, his feelings of resentment and envy show in the manner by which he negatively fixates on Nat and Mary’s innocence and the moral sense that made it possible for them to ‘[make] a place where [he] can’t get’ or possibly ever understand (100-1). There is that moment, of course, when Nat confronts the alienated and lonely Christopher about his need for some sort of direction because he could see that he is not happy (70-1). Christopher, however, only comes to openly admit to having lived an aimless and immoral life near the end of the novel when his delusion of survival finally takes its toll, and forces him to confront the monstrosity of his egocentricity and the cruel ramifications of his choices. Unfortunately, Christopher’s confession does not convey the slightest hint of an intention to take responsibility for the choices he made or even reflect any regret at not being able to make amends to those who were affected by his actions. What it shows, instead, is that Christopher is willing to entertain his torturing hallucinations, even go as far as conversing with the conjured God he did not believe in, as long as he could locate the problem outside his grandiose self:

You gave me the power to choose and all my life you led me carefully to this suffering because my choice was my own. Oh yes! I understand the pattern. All my life, whatever I had done I should have found myself in the end on that same bridge, at that same time, giving that same order—the right order, the wrong order. Yet, suppose I climbed away from the cellar over the bodies of used and defeated people, broke them to make steps on the road away from you, why should you torture me? If I ate them, who gave me a mouth? (197).

Christopher’s failure to admit moral responsibility seems to be frighteningly reminiscent, as previously indicated, of the psychopath’s tendency to dismiss the suffering of others and to remain focused instead on the self’s own wellbeing. In fact, it might be tempting to argue that since Christopher is trapped in a state of single-mindedness that prevents him from showing

emotional empathy to those around him, it is possible not only to deem his moral compass defective, but also to absolve him of the moral responsibility that comes with the choices he makes. It is important to note, though, that emotional empathy should not be simplistically equated with moral sensibility, nor should it be considered the sole condition governing the development of the moral sense and the capacity to take responsibility for one's own actions.¹⁰⁰ As a result, it is difficult to consider Christopher's state of single-mindedness as an argument in favour of absolving him of responsibility, especially since he has clearly shown on one occasion that he is perfectly capable of moral reasoning and of twisting and manipulating the circumstances so that he would not be condemned for his actions. In fact, his conversation with God reveals his awareness that exploiting others the way he did was certainly an immoral thing to do. Still, the best example that perfectly captures Christopher's understanding of the moral consequences of his choices as well as his inclination to evade responsibility is shown in the moment when he is contemplating how he should kill Nat without being detected and without risking being held accountable:

[S]ay one nudged circumstances—not in the sense that one throttled with the hands or fired a gun—but gently shepherded them the way they might go? Since it would be a suggestion to circumstances only it could not be considered what a strict moralist might call it—

‘And who cares anyway?’ ...

The corrosive swamped him. A voice cried out in his belly—I do not want him to die! The sorrow and hate bit deep, went on biting. He cried out with his proper voice.

‘Does no one understand how I feel?’ (104-5).¹⁰¹

Christopher's cry for understanding—which seems like a desperate attempt on his part to suppress his moral reasoning and to search for more justifications that would make killing his best friend excusable—might be perceived as quite reminiscent of Tuami's anguished cry in *The Inheritors* since he, too, is shown as trying to convince himself that he and his people had no other choice but to kill the demons in order to survive.¹⁰² However, despite this particular

¹⁰⁰ In fact, there are cases, such as those of autism, where a moral sense develops despite the marked absence of cognitive and emotional empathy (Baron-Cohen 95), thereby reinforcing the argument that empathy is but one component to morality.

¹⁰¹ Further support to this point can be found in Golding's notes where he states that Christopher ‘[p]lans to bump him [Nat] off in one of the safe ways that war makes easy. Who would suspect? Best friend!’ (qtd. in Carey, *Golding* 194).

¹⁰² Christopher's expression of despair at not having someone who can understand how he feels also appears to communicate his state of phenomenological isolation. After all, the evolution of self-awareness and the creation of individual identities have made it difficult for individuals to share their full existential experience of living

similarity and the fact that Christopher mirrors Tuami's egotism, greed, lust and contempt to a certain extent, it is still possible to argue that Tuami is more recognizably human than Christopher, especially when readers adopt his perspective and develop an understanding of the psychological state of terror that made the momentary suppression of empathy possible.¹⁰³ This would make Christopher's narcissism, as previously indicated, an extreme condition that can be markedly associated with a malignant set of behavioural tendencies that include social manipulation, exploitation, evident selfishness, high competitiveness, intense jealousy, total absence of empathy and a noticeable propensity for violence and aggression (See Holtzman and Strube 212). It should also mark Christopher as a clear exception to the norm, even if he is shown to share an affinity with his ancestors in terms of original sin, because the behaviours that have been listed, and which are believed to have been favoured by natural selection for their adaptive value are driven to an immoral and repulsive extreme that can no longer be considered adaptive, particularly in Christopher's case.¹⁰⁴ Pathological

with those around no matter how close their social ties are (Pyszczynski et al. 7). This has been contrasted with a prior state of oneness that binds the Neanderthals together in *The Inheritors*. As Baker has noted in his discussion of *The Inheritors*, the islands in Golding's novels are supposed to stand for mankind's state of isolation from those around and their alienation from the natural world (*Study* 26).

¹⁰³ Tuami does express the desire to kill Marlan who, contrary to Nat, is actually a despicable person, but Tuami is shown as unable to bring himself to do it. He does carry on an affair with Vivani, and is shown in one scene as being aggressive towards her. His aggression, though, seems to have been brought about by alcohol. He also does not appear, judging by Lok's limited perspective, to be forcing himself on her or to be raping her. More importantly, he is the one person who is shown to be as highly critical of himself and of his people's aggressive tendencies. Marlan, on the other hand, is shown as more focused on how his actions are going to benefit himself than on how they are going to affect others, an aspect that actually brings him closer to Christopher Martin. It would be difficult to come to the conclusion that he, too, might be representing an extreme of egotism because of the epistemological difficulty posed by Lok's limited perspective. Still, his over preoccupation with his own needs perfectly exemplifies both the adaptive and the maladaptive outcomes of being closer to the narcissism end of the continuum. He is represented, after all, as the leader of his tribe, and he does seem to have more access to most of the resources held and acquired. On the other hand, Marlan is hated by his tribesmen to the point where Tuami actually contemplates killing him, raising the possibility that it might only be a matter of time before he is overthrown or even killed.

¹⁰⁴ It is important to remember that most of the traits that are characteristic of pathological narcissism are actually highly adaptive in moderation which explains why it is difficult to define narcissism in the singular terms of adaptivity or maladaptivity (Tracy et al. 437-8; Watson and Biderman). As previously shown, it pays for human nature to be capable of selfishness, exploitation and aggression to a certain extent. One might wonder, though, why intensively narcissistic traits continue to persist despite natural selection's preference for cooperation, altruism and sociality, considered by a number of evolutionary theorists to be more effective at countering common threats than a view of individual survival as paramount (Holtzman and Strube 210). It has been noted that narcissism is highly likely to be an evolutionary variation of dominance that allows individuals to attain more control over the social realm and gain more access to resources that are valued in mate selection (265). This view actually supports Golding's own regarding power and dominance, and how it is only when they take over in human relations that the sin of exploitations occurs (Golding in Haffenden 116). There are also findings that are in support of the notion that because narcissists might initially be perceived as attractive, their seemingly malignant traits can be said to aid in reproductive success (268). Such benefits, though, are not long-term and are likely to wane as the narcissist's 'disagreeableness' begins to show (269). In fact, narcissistic traits are only successfully sustained through short-term mating rather than pair-bonding, a notion that has been reinforced by the observation that narcissism is more common in males than females, and that narcissists are actually predisposed to engage in 'coercive' sexual behaviour (267-8). However, one should still keep in mind

narcissism might have initially proven its adaptive value for Christopher since it made it possible for him to pursue his ambitions and to attain social and sexual dominance among other things. However, most of the benefits that Christopher initially manages to gain are short-lived because it is his narcissism that is responsible for his antisocial tendencies, his loss of empathy and his lack of a moral sensibility, as well as the subsequent incapacity to establish solid relations or attain a meaningful engagement with life. It is also Christopher's egocentricity and single-mindedness that is shown as having cost him his job as an actor, forced him to enlist in the navy and finally led to his drowning in the middle of the Atlantic. This should emphasize the moral dimension of the novel given that it is Christopher's egotism that ultimately leads to his downfall and suffering, something that readers are presumably supposed to find morally appropriate since it conforms to what is typically considered to be fair or just. It seems, however, that readers cannot help but empathize with Pincher as he struggles to survive hell, even as he has created it himself. As a result, critics such as Kermode have concluded that readers actually see something of themselves in Pincher Martin that makes their feelings of empathy more like those of 'self-pity,' and that Christopher is actually more of an Everyman figure than previously thought (qtd. in Carey, *Golding* 202).

Pincher Martin as an Everyman

One of the demands that Golding seems to have made as a novelist in *Pincher Martin* is that readers reevaluate all the conclusions they have drawn throughout the entire novel as they come to the shocking realization that the protagonist's struggle to survive has never actually taken place the way it was made to appear or the way they were led to believe. However, as difficult as such a demand is, judging by the level of frustration that marked the initial critical response to the novel, it does not appear to be as challenging as the demand that readers suspend their empathy for the man who is trying his hardest to overcome death and the natural elements, and to hang on to the safety of the rock in the hopes of getting rescued. In fact, we are highly likely to go on empathizing with Christopher Martin despite whatever knowledge we come to attain of his immoral past because the desire to survive against all odds is one that defines the entire human race, and one that we are less likely to condemn Christopher for, even if it takes on a perverse manifestation as a hallucinatory after-death experience the way Golding intended it to be.

that debates surrounding biological and evolutionary explanations for the emergence and persistence of personality disorders and narcissism are yet to be settled.

This certainly does not mean that it is simply the survival drive that is being depicted as the one sinful possession that allows us to see ourselves in Christopher. We are not the only species on the planet that has been hardwired accordingly, nor are we the only animals in Golding's creations who are depicted as seeking certain behaviours for the purposes of survival. After all, even Golding's innocent Neanderthals, who are granted animal intelligence for the most part, and who are denied the complex cognitive functions that Golding believed to be associated with our sinful nature, are shown to be carrying the self-preservation instinct just like any other complex or simple organism. In fact, common possession of the survival drive can most readily be seen in the almost universal responses of pain and fear which are evolutionarily believed to be crucial in steering animals away from contact with threatening conditions or entities in their environment. It has been observed, however, that animals are designed by natural selection 'to act as if they were motivated to achieve some goal when, in fact, they are not' (Batson and Stocks 155). This means that even though animals are usually seen as trying 'to escape or avoid pain or discomfort,' their behaviour is only meant to 'produce the result of self-preservation without that result being their goal' (155).¹⁰⁵ Such a tendency can also be said to apply to humans to some degree because they, too, have been programmed by natural selection to avoid life-threatening conditions through certain 'hard-wired ... (amygdala) based' fear responses that are not unique to their species (155). However, what sets the human drive for survival on a different level compared to that of the animals is that it has incurred what might be considered to be a more complex dimension through its association with their high level of intelligence. As a result, it has become possible for mankind to comprehend the ramifications of their failure to survive and to strive to avoid those undesirable outcomes at all costs. Humans, after all, are perhaps the only species with a paradoxical existence (Scimecca). They are the only animals capable of perceiving the full conscious experience of living as distinct individuals with their unique sense of identity while still being able to understand and contemplate the eventual reality of their demise (Scimecca; Becker, *Death* 87). According to Batson and Stocks:

[w]ithout a concept of self or individuality, and of one's own death, it makes no sense to speak of an inclination toward self-preservation, or fear of death, or fear of

¹⁰⁵ It should be stressed that this might be the case for Lok. Fa, however, who is shown as cognitively superior to Lok, seems to be capable of maintaining the goal of survival in mind, especially while keeping watch over the Homo Sapiens who can be classified as a novel threat for the Neanderthals. This exemplifies the difficulty of arriving at a definite statement regarding the Neanderthals' intelligence and their capacity for self-awareness based on Lok's limited perspective alone. It also shows that the difference between the Neanderthals and the Homo Sapiens is one that should be tackled in terms of degree, not of kind, as previously explained.

annihilation. There may be relatively hard-wired fears ... [like] fear of heights, dark places, loud noises, or certain animals (e.g., snakes). But a fear of death or annihilation requires more than an amygdala; it also requires concepts that rely on the (prefrontal) cortex and are likely uniquely human. Even in humans, these concepts only develop after several years of life. ... Rather than being a primitive and ancient motive shared with other species, our concern for self-preservation is almost certainly a recent evolutionary development. It is dependent on the cognitive capacities to (1) understand oneself as an existing person and (2) imagine the radically altered reality in which this person no longer exists' (155).

This would make the existential anxiety associated with the knowledge of the terrifying realities of death and annihilation a uniquely human experience and a clear example of the costs individuals are forced to pay for their possession of high intelligence. And since the existential dilemma of death is the kind of anxiety that cannot be considered adaptive, people have found themselves forced to seek out certain defences by which they can guard themselves against the dreadful and overwhelming knowledge of their eventual demise (Landau et al.). One of these defence mechanisms, of course, is people's fundamental narcissism, represented in their striving to maintain some sense of importance through certain shared beliefs and delusions such as the biased perception of themselves as occupying a unique status in the universe that sets them above the animals and grants them the right to impose their will on the natural world.¹⁰⁶ There are also the symbolic constructs and cultural worldviews that not only help in setting standards of value that feed mankind's basic narcissism, but also aid in maintaining a certain conception of the world that provides humanity with the hope of transcending death and the promise of immortality (Solomon, Greenberg and Pyszczynski 18). Such perceptions, of course, do not necessarily conform to reality because reality is highly likely to overwhelm individuals with the anxiety of their insignificance and their eventual death.¹⁰⁷ This explains why people are usually hostile or aggressive to the oppositions, or sometimes even mere existence, of any person, group or belief system that undermines the credibility of their own worldview or that brings the authenticity of their standards of self-importance into question (Landau et al.). It should also reveal another dark dimension to humanity's capacity for aggression represented in its 'narrow and uncritical performance of the social fictions [it] has created' (Scimecca), and its

¹⁰⁶ See Becker, *Death* 3; Goldenberg and Roberts 74; Koole and Van Den Berg 96.

¹⁰⁷ See Becker, *Evil* 124; Scimecca; Janoff-Bulman and Yopyk 128.

readiness 'to kill or die purely for the sake of an abstract set of ideas,' or for a fragile but powerful distortion of reality (Jost, Fitzsimons and Kay 269). In short, man's unique existence as the only animal capable of an awareness of death as a problem has not only made his denial of it through the relentless pursuit of self-esteem and a meaningful worldview a possibly vicious endeavour, but has also taken his survival drive to a higher point of aggression where he is willing to kill to 'affirm his...life' and 'ward off the flow of his own blood' (Becker, *Evil* 111; Scimecca).

Such aspects of the human drive for survival can most clearly be seen in *The Inheritors*, where Golding depicts the vicious annihilation of the gentle Neanderthals as having been brought about by our highly intelligent, violent and self-aware ancestors. This helps in showing Golding as possibly harbouring a conception of the human desire to survive at all costs as one of the sinful outcomes of our cognitive development or our evolutionary fall.¹⁰⁸ It is even possible to see *Pincher Martin* as granting further credence to the notion, considering Golding's depiction of Christopher's monstrous obsession with exploiting and 'crunching up' people and his refusal to let go of his rock delusion, even if it meant sparing himself excruciating mental torture (90). The fact that Golding chose to communicate Christopher's 'extraordinary capacity to endure' through the grotesque imagery of the maggots that are trapped in a tin box with nothing to prey on but one another to survive might indeed be taken as Golding's way of highlighting the repulsive aspects of self-preservation and the immoral dimension to humanity's aggressive drive for survival (71). In other words, although Christopher has been shown to be occupying an extreme on the egotism scale compared to his ancestors in *The Inheritors*, his character remains a gross reflection of the same inherent tendencies that Golding believed to be fuelling the Homo Sapiens' aggressive drive for survival as opposed to the passive and animal-like Neanderthals. We may, of course, continue to condemn Christopher for his immoral past despite sharing the root cause of his sinful tendencies since his immoral condition can still be considered a violation of the norm. But we are not likely to condemn him for wanting to go on living because the realities of death and annihilation are as much of a threat for us to accept as for Christopher Martin. Consequently, we cannot help but empathize with his plight, believe in the authenticity of his

¹⁰⁸ Referring to self-preservation as an instinct is only meant, as Landau and colleagues have clarified, to indicate 'the general orientation toward continued life'. It does not mean that the view expressed does not acknowledge survival at the level of the genes, nor does it deny the fact that there are certain self-destructive behaviours that are more in the service of reproductive success than survival. It should be stressed, however, that it pays for the organism in most cases to survive long enough for it to attain reproductive success and to care for its own offspring (Landau et al.), which means that the focus on survival should not be considered misplaced or unjustified.

creation, or hope for its survival against the will of the seemingly cruel God that wants to take it all away. We may even end up admiring Christopher for the same monstrous will responsible for his immoral past for it is the one thing fuelling his delusion of survival and keeping him going in a seemingly heroic frenzy against the negating force of the 'black lightning' that is constantly threatening to annihilate him along with his creation. After all, argues Becker, the fact that we do not know how we are ever going to handle or conquer the terror of negation, or if we are ever going to be brave enough to confront the threat of annihilation, is one reason why '[we] admire most the courage to face death,' and why one perception of the hero across different centuries and civilizations is that of a man 'who could go into the spirit world, the world of the dead, and return alive' (*Death* 12).

There is certainly the fact that Christopher continually insists on acting the roles of the great tragic heroes as he continues to entertain his torturing delusion of survival that helps to explain why it is possible to perceive his futile struggle in a rather positive or heroic light. It is important to note, though, that such an act of heroism on Christopher's part can also be said to stem from the same existential anxiety motivating us to empathize with Christopher or to accept his account of endurance as a testament to his courage and heroism. In other words, Christopher's heroic delusion is not merely a manifestation of his narcissistic personality disorder, but is also a gross expression of the human narcissistic preoccupation with the symbolic self that people seek to immortalize through their adoption of particular symbolic worldviews, or what Becker came to label as the cultural 'hero system' (*Death* 4; *Evil* 124). According to Becker, 'heroism is first and foremost a reflex of the terror of death' (*Death* 11). And when an individual insists on playing a particular role that would bolster his self-esteem or mark his existence as meaningful or significant in one way or another, he is in effect engaging in his own 'causa-sui' or heroic project in accordance with the standards and guidelines set by his own culture or worldview (*Death* 11).¹⁰⁹ Accomplishing an immortality project implies the successful engagement in an act or a role that is deemed by cultural standards to be an act of heroism whether it is 'the "high" heroism of a Churchill, a Mao, or a Buddha, ... the "low" heroism of the coal miner, the peasant, the simple priest; [or] the plain, everyday, earthy heroism wrought by gnarled working hands guiding a family through

¹⁰⁹ It has been previously suggested, of course, that Christopher's narcissism is largely responsible for directing his delusion of survival in such a manner; however, it is important not to overlook the fact that narcissism itself, or rather the healthy measure of self-centredness or self-esteem, has been basically indicated as one of mankind's essential defences against the terror of death or annihilation (Solomon, Greenberg and Pyszczynski 19; Becker, *Death* 3).

hunger and disease' (4-5).¹¹⁰ It is possible, therefore, to consider Christopher's delusion of endurance as a desperate attempt at bolstering his sense of importance and engaging his self-esteem defences in accordance with both his narcissistic standards of value and those of his own worldview against the potential anxiety associated with the repressed knowledge of his impending death.¹¹¹ This highlights yet another reason why Christopher is repeatedly seen as priding himself in his strength, education and intelligence as these are the kind of assets valued by the rational worldview that he seems to have willfully subscribed to in his rejection of the mystical and his revulsion for the irrational. It is also ironic that even though Christopher humbly denies being a hero at an earlier point in the novel (77), he cannot help but act the roles of the great Greek heroes 'for whom the impossible was an achievement,' and cast his suffering in a manner resembling theirs, especially when his hallucinations become particularly threatening (164). Christopher, in the end, is an Everyman, born with the original sin of egotism and forced to live with a terror exposed by the same gift he believes to have set him above the other animals. His only defence against the crippling terror of annihilation, of being preyed upon by death, or maybe even God, the same way he has preyed on others, is to give into the unconscious operation of his mind and watch his near death hallucinations turn into delusions, not of transcendence offered by the comfort of religion, but of a nightmarish survival fuelled by the darkness of human nature and its greed for life.

It is hard to detect the degree of Christopher's ingenuity on reading the novel for the first time, especially if he is thought of as another castaway who was unfortunate enough to end up on a barren rock with no resources to utilize for survival or for bringing himself 'virtually all the comforts of home' the same way the famous Crusoe did (S. Boyd 51). However, although Christopher is seen as incapable of making the most of his poor environment or of going beyond naming certain parts of the rock after places back home, he remains a far more resourceful and creative villain than Robinson Crusoe. After all, Christopher has not only 'invented the island upon which he is stranded' (51), but also succeeded in rooting his creation within the illusion of a normally functioning world, 'obeying the laws of nature to

¹¹⁰ Most of Ernest Becker's views have resulted in the creation of Terror Management Theory (TMT) which sought to establish the denial of death through carefully designed experiments and tests as a powerful force directing the psychological and existential aspects of different cultures and worldviews. (Solomon, Greenberg and Pyszczynski).

¹¹¹ One of the interesting points raised by Becker in *The Denial of Death* is that mental illness can be analysed in terms of the dysfunctionality or abnormality of one's immortality project (208-9). Depression, for example, is viewed as an outcome of the failure of one's hero project, leaving the individual more prone than ever to experience the terror of existence (210).

the last drop' (*Pincher* 180).¹¹² The life that Christopher Martin creates on the rock is a highly realistic one with every sensation of touch, hearing and taste carefully recalled, and with every detail and element cautiously constructed so as not to expose the fragility of his creation or raise doubts about its existence. Still, despite all the trouble that Christopher goes through to grant his invention a sense of normality, he finds himself incapable of preventing certain elements that are in clear violation of all that is logical or sensible from intruding into his seemingly functional world and from exposing its terrifying reality. Some of these elements, such as the reptile birds and the red lobsters, are easily dismissed and initially overlooked by readers because Christopher does not struggle to rationalize them, nor does he fixate on them as obvious threats that have to be directly dealt with to mask the hallucinatory nature of his rock (57, 111).¹¹³ In fact, he finds it sufficient to simply assert the illusion of normality by directing his attention to the chores that he has already assigned to himself for the same particular purpose: from 'keeping [his] body going' by providing it with the much needed food and sleep, to building the unnatural seaweed pattern and stone figure that he believes are going to help alert planes and ships to the possibility of a survivor being on the rock (81).

This measure initially proves functional to a certain extent because Christopher is in desperate need of engaging in tasks that can promote the false hope of rescue, in addition to helping him maintain a sense of a meaningful existence against the overwhelming terror of annihilation. However, as his hallucinations continue to spiral out of control, threatening with every inexplicable intrusion to bring an end to the god pretence he is hoping to maintain for an eternity, he finds himself forced into a frantic search for rationalizations that will not jeopardize the integrity of his creation or risk the disintegration of his identity. This explains why he struggles to keep on reaffirming the normality of his world by denying that there is anything strange in what he perceives, and by asserting that it is all part of 'the ordinary experience of living' (82). When this tactic fails, he resorts to seeking the more desperate

¹¹² Crusoe may have been a colonial hero. It seems, however, that he has more in common with Christopher than the simple determination to survive. Both Christopher and Crusoe, for one thing, share an immoral past that leads to their creators' forcing them into conditions of isolation and suffering. Both also appear to be despicable characters in the same way. According to Gurnow, Crusoe is 'an unapologetic racist, imperialist, fickle theist, and megalomaniac par excellence.' His megalomania is, for the most part, a translation of an Anglo-Saxon heritage that deems itself superior to other races and constructs its morality accordingly.

¹¹³ That does not mean, however, that Christopher does not find them threatening at all because they seem to fill him with a deep sense of repulsion and fear every time he fails to direct his attention away from them. After all, the gulls are seen as 'flying reptiles' because he is thinking of them in terms of evolution (56-7). The lobsters that are ironically 'different in colour' also betray the artificiality of his world because the only lobsters he has seen are those that were already boiled and sold on the fishmongers' stands (*Pincher* 111; Golding in Newington).

narratives of sickness as a means by which he can account for all the irrational aspects of his experience that can no longer be overlooked or ignored. After all, rationalizing his experience as having been caused by an illness still holds the promise of locating his anxiety-arousing problem ‘in a place where it can be purged,’ even if it holds the risk of undermining his positive self-image by ‘mingl[ing] the heroic, the pathetic, and the comic grotesque’ (*Pincher* 82; Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 145). However, as much of a possible risk as such a rationalization may hold, it remains a far less harmless measure than a narrative of madness. It does not, after all, pose the threat of undermining Christopher’s intelligence which is basically the only possession holding the promise of restoring the illusion of normality as much as it threatens to take it away. Christopher is aware, of course, of the grave risk that madness holds. He even states that he does not want to go mad, but feels that ‘he will have to ... because the sea is a terror—the worst terror there is, the worst imaginable’ (*Pincher* 187). Still, as every other rationalization fails him, Christopher eventually finds himself compelled to abandon his sanity and succumb to whatever comfort that a narrative of madness can offer. Madness, after all, can easily ‘account for everything, lobsters, maggots, hardness, brilliant reality, the laws of nature, film-trailers, snapshots of sight and sound, flying lizards, [and] enmity’ (190). Its greatest danger is that it robs Christopher of whatever illusion of control he has left and turns him into a helpless spectator who can only watch in terror as his creation falls apart.

What these series of rationalizations mainly show, given that they all share the common purpose of denying the fictional nature of the rock experience, is that whatever beliefs or interpretations Christopher has chosen to impose on his hallucinations at the moment of his drowning are mostly directed by the anxiety of negation and by the deep-seated terror of death and annihilation. Such concerns can also be said to be at work in the readers’ minds, affecting their response to Christopher’s rationalizations and goading them, the same way they goaded Christopher, into overlooking, or maybe even attributing, the irrational aspects of Christopher’s delusions to his seemingly unfortunate descent into madness. This should explain, as Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor have observed, why it may at first not seem important to us what kind of person Christopher is as we are stranded on the rock with him to share his terrors and anxieties (130). Still, it is important to note that though Christopher’s fear of death remains the most crucial factor affecting the content of his hallucinations, there are other elements in his rock experience that can only be accounted for if we construct his past identity from his recollections. It is important to demonstrate, in other words, how his beliefs, memories and past experiences have resulted in the cognitive biases shaping

Christopher's hallucinations and directing his interpretation of them as supposedly comforting narratives of survival.

The process of creating the rock should provide the clearest example showcasing the effects of Christopher's cognitive biases. After all, it has been explicitly stated that Christopher's fabrication of it has been mainly influenced by the memory of an old rotten tooth whose recall Christopher is desperately trying to block. One can also consider Christopher's belief in a rational worldview, rather than a mystical or a religious one, to be a major factor dictating the construction of almost every element on his rock and providing the illusion of a seemingly functional creation that is in accordance with the common laws of nature. In fact, Christopher's obsessive desire to comply with what is considered to be logical or rational may well be one reason why he ends up stranding himself on a barren rock in the middle of the ocean, rather than granting himself the far more comforting but complicated illusion of a ship. Another reason is that he is unable to summon the mental resources that might explain its unreasonable shape or movement in a manner that would make the hallucination believable:

But what ship was ever so lop-sided? A carrier? A derelict carrier, deserted and waiting to sink? But she would have been knocked down by a salvo of torpedoes. A derelict liner? Then she must be one of the Queens by her bulk—and why lop-sided? The sun and the mist were balanced against each other. The sun could illumine the mist but not pierce it. And darkly in the sun-mist loomed the shape of a not-ship where nothing but a ship could be (*Pincher* 20).

It also seems that, despite the ingenuity that makes it possible for Pincher Martin to turn his hallucinations into a delusion that could grant him the most needed hope of rescue, he cannot allow himself the experience of the paradisaal island common in most of the castaways' adventures. Doing so, after all, would require violating what he already knows about the 'single point of rock' located 'many miles away from the Hebrides' (30-1), the only place that should logically exist in that particular location in the Atlantic, and the only place that will rationally serve as a stage for his heroic delusions as he awaits rescue (31).¹¹⁴

This leaves Christopher with the task of reconstructing and maintaining an identity capable of withstanding the barren and harsh conditions of a fictional world in a

¹¹⁴ In fact, the rock that Christopher creates is supposed to be the famous Rockall as Golding had indicated in his interview with Biles (73). It has also been implied in the novel through the mention of the expression 'near miss' to signify the name that Christopher was never able to recall and which basically sounds like a common obscenity (*Pincher* 31; Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 135).

narcissistically heroic manner so as to counter the impending reality of death and keep it from intruding on his delusion. The problem, however, is that what we call a self or identity is basically a form of deception, a powerful illusion whose construction and maintenance is dependent on a set of cognitive processes closely associated with autobiographical memory, and largely reliant on the presence of a social mirror that helps define the self and acknowledge its existence in any given world (Wilson and Ross; Hood 184-5). Christopher, of course, is denied the crucial presence of the social context which once provided him with ‘assurance of [his] solidity in the bodies of other people,’ especially those whom he had used and exploited (132). This means that both Christopher and his creation lack one of the crucial elements that could establish the validity of the rock or reinforce the aspects of identity that he desperately wishes to maintain against the threat of negation. As a result, he has no other alternative but to rely solely on his memory resources for these particular purposes, and to seek out the recollections that might aid in reinforcing the predatory side of his nature so as to maintain hope in his capacity to overcome whatever obstacle may stand in the way of survival. This should further explain Christopher’s fixation on his immoral past as being less of a sign of a guilty conscience, and more of an outcome of his need to assert his existence as a successful maggot in an unkind world created out of his obsession with devouring people. After all, the process of recalling autobiographical memories for the purposes of identity construction and maintenance is believed to be largely governed by present goals and ‘desired self-views’ (Wilson and Ross). This may grant further credence to the reason why Christopher is repeatedly seen as biased towards recalling his past crimes, and why he is sometimes shown as urging himself to reminisce about those particular incidents as his delusion threatens to collapse. Such a tendency can most clearly be seen in that one episode where Christopher grows aware of his incapacity to sleep and starts worrying about losing his sanity to insomnia:

He lay still and considered sleep. But it was a tantalizingly evasive subject. Think about women then or eating. Think about eating women, eating men, crunching up Alfred, that other girl, that boy, that crude and unsatisfactory experiment, lie restful as a log and consider the gnawed tunnel of life right up to this uneasy intermission.

This rock. (*Pincher* 90).

It is possible to argue, of course, that Christopher’s intention of contemplating his own life tunnel may well be taken as a sign of a dying man’s effort to understand the kind of choices

and circumstances that led to his becoming the despicable person for whom the manipulation and exploitation of others are proof of existence. However, such a conclusion is not likely to be the case for Pincher, especially since it has been emphasized that no matter what the circumstance, Christopher would have ended up making the same immoral choices responsible for distorting his near death hallucinations into a torturing delusion, and for turning his life into a hellish tale of excruciating endurance up to the moment of his annihilation (*Pincher* 197). *Pincher Martin*, after all, is a novel that is more concerned with addressing the questions of being and its ‘implications’ rather than those associated with ‘cause and effect’ or becoming (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 158). This might explain why most of the memories and recollections that Christopher appears to be fixated on are ‘static’ (159), focused on emphasizing the innateness and unchangeability of Christopher’s monstrosity, and on highlighting the permanence of a state of predatory being rather than that of becoming (157).¹¹⁵ This is crucial because establishing a sense of permanence to a fiendish existence is basically what is fuelling Christopher’s monstrous drive for survival:

‘Christopher Hadley Martin. Martin. Chris. I am what I always was!’

All at once it seemed to him that he came out of his curious isolation inside the globe of his head and was extended normally through his limbs. He lived again on the surface of his eyes, he was out in the air. ... The solid rock was coherent as an object, with layered guano, with fresh water and shell-fish. ...

‘I don’t claim to be a hero. But I’ve got health and education and intelligence. I’ll beat you.’

The sea said nothing. He grinned a little foolishly at himself.

‘What I meant was to affirm my determination to survive.’ (*Pincher* 76-7).

It is highly ironic, though, that as advantageous as such a state of predatory being has proven to be for Christopher Martin, it has been shown as the one thing turning his delusion into a hellish nightmare, and robbing it of whatever sense of momentary comfort it was initially able to provide. As stated earlier, the content of delusions and hallucinations can be clearly influenced by a person’s consciously and unconsciously held beliefs and convictions (See Kent and Wahass; Morrison). Since Christopher is the kind of person who has always lived

¹¹⁵ The extreme Christopher represents, much like that of Nazism, is one of potentiality, so even though Christopher does not appear to be an Everyman, he is shown to be a ‘permanent’ possibility for what Everyman may end up like; permanent because unlike the Children in *Lord of the Flies* and Tuami in *The Inheritors*, Christopher’s descent into an extreme and his marked lack of empathy do not appear to be caused by a momentary lapse of judgement that he is capable of expressing guilt, shame or remorse over.

his life as a maggot, preying on others and obsessing over not wanting to be devoured, it makes sense to see some of the elements in his delusion as corresponding with those particular aspects of his nature. The rock, for example, is created out of the memory of a tooth, an element that denotes the function of eating and that signifies Christopher's determination to overcome death and annihilation at all costs. The problem with resorting to such a source for inspiration, however, is that it reduces whatever sense of comfort Christopher can get out of it because it holds the potential for devouring him as much as it promises safety. This would make the anxiety of not wanting to be eaten and defeated by his own creation another major reason why Christopher is constantly seen as trying to mask the source of his inspiration, evident in both his dread and repulsion by the supposedly harmless thought of naming a group of rocks in his created world 'the Teeth' (*Pincher* 90-1).¹¹⁶

It has already been established that there are no antagonistic forces in Pincher Martin's world that can be classified as a serious threat jeopardizing his momentary sense of safety or exposing the reality of his delusion aside from those of his past self, beliefs and crimes. This does not mean, however, that Christopher's paranoid mind is incapable of conjuring an antagonistic presence that it can then associate with the memory of the black lightning in order to create a hateful God with an incessant striving to devour Christopher whole and put an end to his existence. In fact, it is possible to see Christopher's antagonism towards God and his creation of him in his own image as being greatly reminiscent of his ancestor's behaviour in *The Inheritors*; both are largely dictated by the human tendency to project its nature on others and to read its own darkness and intentions in the behaviour and actions of those around. As a result, Christopher cannot help but slip into a racking state of hypervigilance, the same way his ancestors did following their encounter with the forest demons, and risk the normality of his creation by denying himself the crucial illusion of sleep. Sleep, after all, entails 'a consenting to die, to go into complete unconsciousness, the personality defeated' (91). Ironically, however, Christopher's state of hypervigilance eventually proves to be as destructive as the dreadful illusion of sleep, if not more so, because it forces him into a sharper state of awareness that makes it difficult to keep on ignoring all the discrepancies in his creation without feeling the need to account for them in one way or another. Rationalizations do work to a certain extent; still, they cannot remain effective

¹¹⁶ Such a conclusion is in accordance with Golding's view that people's experience of purgatory is one that is shaped by their beliefs and nature prior to death: 'My point is really this you see ... If you're not a Christian and die, then if the universe is as the Christian sees it, you will still go either to heaven or hell or purgatory. But your purgatory, or your heaven or your hell won't have the Christian attributes ... they'll be the things you make yourself, and that's all there is to it' (qtd. in Baker, *Study* 39).

because the anxieties responsible for Christopher's hypervigilance are closely associated with a destructive force that has always been a part of mankind's dark nature, and that Christopher is never able to master, govern or overcome.

Such a desire to distort is again undertaken in *Free Fall* where Golding explores the ramifications of forcing a falsifying pattern on the world through a protagonist who has more in common with Christopher than meets the eye. In fact, the novel engages with most of the concerns expressed in *Pincher Martin*, including those of identity construction, reality distortion, freedom of choice and the sinful exploitation of the innocent. The only difference is that instead of tackling such matters as static aspects of one's state of being, Golding actually engages with the much more complex questions of becoming through a less fabular construct that marks an abandonment of the limiting and carefully constructed conditions of his previous novels.

CHAPTER FOUR

Free Fall and the Perils of Freedom and Identity

As soon as you look at the world through an ideology you are finished. No reality fits an ideology. Life is beyond that. That is why people are always searching for a meaning to life. But life has no meaning; it cannot have meaning because meaning is a formula; meaning is something that makes sense to the mind. Every time you make sense out of reality, you bump into something that destroys the sense you made. Meaning is only found when you go beyond meaning. Life only makes sense when you perceive it as mystery and it makes no sense to the conceptualizing mind.

Anthony De Mell, *Awareness, the Perils and Opportunities of Reality*.¹¹⁷

In an interview with Owen Webster in 1958 before *Free Fall* (1959) was published, Golding stated that one of the crucial tasks of the writer is to ‘get people to understand their own humanity’ by demonstrating their state of self-deception and their misapprehension of the human condition (in Webster 5; Biles, *Talk* 39). However, for such an endeavour to be pursued properly, this assumes that the writer is capable of seeing things for what they truly are or of interrogating and challenging the normative, rather than accepting things the way they are presented (in Webster 5). Such a demand can be considered particularly difficult, given how it necessitates ‘[scraping] the labels off things,’ and not ‘[taking] anything for granted’ (5). It dictates that the writer holds at a distance powerful political, religious or rational belief systems like Marxism, orthodox Christianity, or even progressive evolution as still in many ways controversial science. It also requires that the author recognizes how each system may induce the projection onto the world of holistic and rigid patterns that distort reality and deny those aspects of human existence that cannot be accommodated or explained (in Webster 5; Biles, *Talk* 103). Moreover, Golding may have emphasized ‘intransigence in the face of accepted belief’ as one of the crucial conditions that a writer must strive to obtain because the ‘furtive optimism’ inherent in some of these systems like Marxism and Wellsian

¹¹⁷ p. 148.

evolution may detract attention from the real roots of humanity's ailments. They may promote hope in social and biological perfectibility while ignoring that problems such as war, aggression and violence are not the kind of problems that can merely be externalized or traced to a faulty social system (in Biles, *Talk* 50; in Webster 5-6; Carey, *Golding* 220). Our reality, Golding suggests, is that of a cosmic chaos that we are tempted to deny by having it simplistically reduced or explained away by our belief systems. Still, if there is one thing that modern man must learn, it is 'to live fearlessly with the natural chaos of existence, without forcing artificial patterns on it' (Golding in Webster 5). This key notion had always been an integral part of Golding's past engagements with human nature; but since it was never fully grasped by critics of his generation,¹¹⁸ Golding might have thought it necessary to dedicate his next project, *Free Fall*, to tackling this aspect of human existence with a greater depth and intensity, and to illustrating the sheer 'patternlessness of life before we impose patterns on it' (5).

The novel was initially intended by Golding to stand 'as a bit of imagery for a whole baffled generation, meant to convey planlessness, chaos and impotence' before it turned into what may be considered as the most comprehensive endeavour at depicting the complex reality of human experience (qtd. in Carey, *Golding* 220). In searching and narrating episodes of his past, Sammy Mountjoy hopes to find an answer to the one question that the dark world of *Pincher Martin* was never able to provide; how he had come to lock himself in a permanent and arrested state of being, tied inextricably to sin, guilt and responsibility. The conclusion he arrives at is not so different in essence from what Golding's past characters have discovered. However, what marks *Free Fall*'s protagonist as distinct, and as possibly even more aware compared to his predecessors, is that his apprehension of the human condition is more the result of a willed conscious search for the truth and less of an outcome of a forced or unintended confrontation with it. Like Golding, Sammy the artist holds a firm belief in the limitations of human understanding and the insufficiency of their belief systems. Consequently, he expresses an outward rejection of them as he attempts to undertake the task of searching his past for the purpose of seeing his existence for what it truly is and for understanding why his life turned out the way it did. In the opening chapter of the novel, Sammy clearly conveys how he had come to find that none of the systems he subscribed to at one point of his life were useful, true to reality or sufficient:

¹¹⁸ See Baker, *Study* 47; Clements 81; Gregor and Kinkead-Weekes 116.

I have hung all systems on the wall like a row of useless hats. They do not fit. They come in from outside, they are suggested patterns, some dull and some of great beauty. But I have lived enough of my life to require a pattern that fits over everything I know; and where shall I find that? Then why do I write this down? Is it a pattern I'm looking for? That Marxist hat in the middle of the row, did I ever think it would last me a lifetime? What is wrong with the Christian biretta that I hardly wore at all? Nick's rationalist hat kept the rain out, seemed impregnable plate-armour, dull and decent. It looks small now and rather silly, a bowler like all bowlers, very formal, very complete, very ignorant (*Fall* 2-3).

Sammy's admission of the insufficiency of forcing distorting patterns on reality while still maintaining that it is only human to want to seek a comprehensive pattern that could bring his whole experience into unity may show the problem in a rather bleak or pessimistic light. It carries the implication that people are condemned to search, to 'crawl towards the light' despite their knowledge that '[they] may never get there' (Golding in Biles, *Talk* 102). But it is important to note that despite such an acknowledgement of the depth and complexity of the problem, Sammy the amateur novelist genuinely believes that it is possible to find a pattern if he attempts to re-engage with episodes of his past, just as Golding had expressed that a solution is possible if one attempts to develop an awareness of the depth of the problem (in Biles, *Talk* 104). Such implicit indications of hope, despite Sammy's failure to find a connection between the contradictory aspects of his experience, may not be easily detectable at first. They might, however, become so once an association is made with what may be considered to be Golding's clearest effort at depicting a hopeful perspective of humanity's moral condition following the fall. To come out of the monstrous world of *Pincher Martin* into *Free Fall*, is to come to discover a brighter side of human nature, represented this time in a protagonist who though initially succumbing to his dark sinful side, expresses an honest desire to be forgiven and absolved.

Free Fall is in essence, to use Golding's words, 'a confession' (qtd. in Carey, *Golding* 226), an attempt on the narrator's part to go over his past mistakes in the hopes of understanding why he has become the sinful monster he perceives himself to be. There is, nonetheless, more to Golding's use of the word than a simplified statement of what the book is basically about. *Free Fall* is a work of a highly autobiographical nature, evident in certain episodes of the novel that were inspired by events and people considered to have played a crucial role in Golding's life. For one thing, there is the character of the rational atheist, Nick

Shales, whose kindness is partially responsible for young Sammy's rejection of the spiritual realm the same way Golding's kind father was responsible for his son's atheism despite his struggling against it as a child (227). There is also the cruel religious teacher Rowena Pringle who, in many ways, is reminiscent of Golding's most disliked teacher, Miss Pierce, described by Carey as 'a puritanical spinster' who, much like Golding's own father, was certainly prone to over regarding sexual propriety and the detection of potential sexual indecency (32, 227). Another crucial episode of Golding's life that found its way into *Free Fall* is his encounter and falling in love with Mollie Evans, represented in the novel as the virtuous, pure and innocent Beatrice Ifor who ends up in a mental asylum following Sammy's abuse and abandonment (76-7, 227). Like Beatrice, Mollie, who was engaged to Golding at one point, was found to be 'pretty,' 'unthinking' and 'frigid,' and was soon abandoned when Golding met Ann in one of the Marxist meetings he attended before the war (77, 227).¹¹⁹ This may mark both Sammy Mountjoy and William Golding as one and the same in many ways, especially since Golding had clearly expressed that he used his own life as a source for structuring most of the events in the novel. It is important to note, however, that although this had clearly been the situation, there are certain aspects of Golding's life that were 'stood on their head' as is usually the case for most of the sources Golding utilized in the creation of some of his novels (Golding in Biles, *Talk* 80). Sammy, for example, unlike Golding, was not brought up by a kind schoolmaster, but is shown instead as an illegitimate child raised by a single mother in the dirty slums of Rotten Row before he is later adopted by the guilty paedophile, Father Watts-Watt. In an interview with Jack Biles, Golding stated that:

Free Fall was an invention from beginning to end, a deliberate invention. All the terms of my life were turned upside down ... I said to myself, 'you were in the navy; well this man has to be in the army. You are a writer; you'll have to make this man a painter.' And so, all the way around, the whole thing was an invention in much the same way that *Envoy Extraordinary* was an invention. Even so far as the question of 'What was there that happened to people during the war?' which brought the whole question of freedom of action up in the most poignant way (79-80).

Free Fall, of course, is not the only novel that exhibits Golding's tendency to incorporate some autobiographical elements into his creations, nor is Sammy Mountjoy the only

¹¹⁹ It is interesting that Golding would remember Mollie as such because Alec, Golding's father, does not recall her in the same way. To Alec, Mollie is a 'bright girl' who was 'good at languages' (Carey, *Golding* 77). This may in a way highlight how Sammy later comes to remember Beatrice and how he considers himself a fool for not perceiving her existence as more than empty.

character who shares Golding's life experiences and self-castigation over what he perceived to be his sins and crimes. There is also Christopher Martin whose despicable nature is in many ways a translation of Golding's extreme sense of guilt and what he perceived to be his 'greed, lust, egotism, cruelty and ambition' (Carey, *Golding* 193).¹²⁰ However, it would certainly be wrong to consider Christopher, or even Sammy, as faithful depictions of their creator, even if both characters seemed like 'a self-defaming self-portrait' (193), because both are meant in the end to be Everyman figures, with Sammy representing the hope of repentance, and with Christopher symbolizing the possibility of a state of permanent malignance. Their affinity with Golding, in other words, which is partially responsible for establishing some commonalities between the two, especially when it comes to their obsession and abuse of an innocent being, should be targeted as more of an expression of their own humanity than a possible attempt on the author's part to draw a self-portrait.

Though it had been noted as distinctive because of its unique form and structure, *Free Fall* is often seen as closely connected in terms of content to its predecessor, and in many ways represents an expansion of certain notions that have already been specifically highlighted within the dark world of Christopher Martin. If *Pincher Martin* depicts Golding's concern with the theological aspect of free will and the exercise of choice following death, *Free Fall* can be considered to be more of an ambitious exploration of the complex existential, theological and philosophical realities of guilt, responsibility and the limitations of man's freedom through yet another fallen character, haunted by the darkness of his sinful nature and the crimes of his past. Like Christopher Martin, Sammy Mountjoy, the narrator of *Free Fall*, and the protagonist through whom we perceive most of the events of the novel, is a tortured soul who finds himself at some point of his life forced to relive images of his static past, revealing the sinful depths to which he had sunk as he has continued, time and time again, to make the same choices that have driven him further away from the moral and the spiritual realm. However, although both characters are shown through their own recollections to have not been particularly different in terms of their lack of morality or the inability to take

¹²⁰ Pincher seems to have been drawn to be Golding in more than one way. John Carey shows that Pincher was driven to acting, much like Golding. His childhood nightmares were also translated into Pincher's old woman. Golding's own acquaintances, crushes, friends, were mostly transformed into characters in the novel, and his feelings towards each and every one of them were monstrously portrayed. Mary, for example, who is one of the many people exploited by Christopher, is reminiscent of the real life Mollie Evans towards whom Golding felt a strange attraction (Carey, *Golding* 193). Similarly, Nat is none other than Golding's friend Adam Bittleston whom Golding believed to have exploited when he sold one of his books to buy a ticket for *Hamlet*. Christopher's attempt to kill Nat, according to Carey, 'depicted not what [Golding] had done, but what he believed he had the capacity to do' (194). He even seemed to believe, as Carey had concluded based on Golding's exchange with Stephen Medcalf, that 'all wickedness could be found in his heart' (194).

responsibility for their cruelty, their motivations for putting themselves in a state of fixation on their reprehensible past help establish one as a more sympathetic character than the other. For Christopher Martin, who has become a pincher by rejecting the Christ within him (Golding in Carey, *Golding* 226), memory searching is by no means a sign of a guilty conscience, but is rather a desperate measure to try to gain definition as he engages in a solitary struggle against the obliterating mercy of death and the threat of negation. When it comes to Sammy, however, the process starts taking on a greater moral significance given that it stems from a dormant sense of guilt that cultivates the desire to understand how he lost his innocence in the first place and allowed himself the conversion to the experiential world of sin, moral anguish and responsibility. This makes Sammy ‘a subtilized Pincher’ (Kinhead-Weekes and Gregor 165), who manages to spare himself the excruciating agony of the irredeemable Christopher Martin by embracing the traumatic revelation of the darkness of his sinful nature and admitting an honest desire for confession, redemption and forgiveness as his narrative progresses to a close. By seeking to find the one defining moment that has marked his conversion into what seems like a permanent state of sinfulness, Sammy’s narrative not only engages in the crucial existential questions of being previously raised in *Pincher Martin*, but also takes on the much more challenging notions of becoming in a deterministic universe, governed by the laws of nature as much as it is governed by a divine higher power whose presence defies the grasp of reason and rationality.¹²¹

Though Golding considered *Free Fall* an important novel possibly because it targets one of the basic problems of the twentieth century intellectual, that is being in a state of free fall (in Biles, *Talk* 80-1), the critics at the time did not appear to share Golding’s opinion, very much evident in its negative reviews, some of the worst that Golding ever received (Carey, *Golding* 233). Some of these reviews showed complete dissatisfaction with the book, describing it as ‘dull, and dull in the most disturbing way,’ and pronouncing it as ‘a failure in almost every direction’ (See Toynbee). Other reviews, as noted by Babb, tended to represent the work as an unsuccessful fable, an incessant or ceaseless ‘comment ... on the myth’ rather than a dedicated attempt to dramatize it or have ‘a convincing reenactment’ of it (Kermode, ‘Novels’ 118-9; Babb 98). There were, of course, positive critical responses that considered *Free Fall* as Golding’s ‘most interesting novel’ (Perrott), a ‘fiercely distinguished book’ (Kermode in Carey, *Golding* 233), and a ‘brilliant and obscure’ creation (Baker, *Study* 55).

¹²¹ It was Kinhead-Weekes and Gregor who noted *Pincher Martin* as a novel about being and *Free Fall* as a book about becoming (165).

However, their somewhat positive acknowledgement did not exclude an admission of the novel's weaknesses since even these positive reviews tended to view *Free Fall* as 'a triumph in one respect,' but 'a failure' in another (Baker, *Study* 55; Babb 116-7). This can most clearly be seen in the fact that in most of the critical reviews, the doubts surrounding the incisiveness of the prison scene were also congruent with so much praise for the delicacy and brilliance that went into the writing of the seduction episode, considered by Toynbee to be the novel's 'only redeeming feature' (Toynbee; See Beddoe in Carey, *Golding* 233-4). There had also been some concerns raised in relation to Golding's abandonment of the overt artifice of the fable and his apparent shift to the conventions and familiar realm of the social novel, glimpsed only in the torturing flashbacks of Christopher Martin. The complaint is interesting given that, according to Biles, Golding had already perhaps decided to comply with the repeated requests from certain critics to place the novel in more recognizable conditions (*Talk* 78). It seems, however, that it is the bold choices that followed the switch to the social novel, changes which Carey notes as having emerged after much deliberation and repeated attempts at rewriting and revising the work for final publication, that did not sit well with critics at the time (Carey, *Golding* 229).

One of the first things that readers are bound to notice as different about *Free Fall* is that it is the first novel where Golding utilizes the first person perspective, thereby forgoing the advantageous aspects of third person narration, so often associated with the dramatic shift in perspective crucial to the communication of Golding's basic thematic concerns. The change may have come about in order to allow Golding the freedom to search Sammy's past while highlighting at the same time the confessional aspect of the work and the difficulty of communication that is inherent in humanity's entrapment within the self. Despite these advantages, however, the choice did not come without costs. For Babb, the change may have fostered a limitation closely connected to what he perceives as flaws in characterization most obviously apparent in the way Beatrice is constructed and portrayed (118). Because she is mostly represented to readers the way Sammy perceives her, that is as an empty dull being, she does not arouse readerly sympathy as much as she should, even when readers are made aware that their blindness to her true being is basically Sammy's, and that Beatrice is more than what Sammy claims her to be (118). Josipovici also offers a supporting opinion, stating that Golding's decision led him to be 'trapped in the fluid consciousness' of his protagonist without allowing himself some external means of representing his argument or of reinforcing man's imprisonment within 'the toils of his own subjectivity' ('Source' 247). This becomes particularly clear when compared to the dual perspective of his previous more fabular novels

which, according to Josipovici, was more effective in communicating the sense, for example, of ‘the new men and Pincher Martin both from within and from without’ (247). *Free Fall*’s narrative mode, however, lacks this kind of flexibility, and might be seen, therefore, as disallowing or failing to arouse sufficient empathy for Sammy’s victim, or even of expressing his own egocentricity and solipsism with the same efficacy and intensity demonstrated in the past more fabular works (Babb 118; Josipovici, ‘Source’ 247). It should be noted, however, that while the mode of third person narration, or rather the dramatic shift in perspective, allowed for more clarity and efficacy in delivering Golding’s thematic concerns, *Free Fall*’s chaotic, obscure and selective narrative mode remains crucial in that it reinforces Golding’s growing belief in the incommunicable mystery of existence and the difficulty of ever knowing the truth. The device is also important in that it reinforces Sammy’s narrative as a traumatic one, emerging out of both the trauma of the age and Sammy’s own, especially considering how characteristic elements of indescribability and obscurity are of traumatic narratives, in general, and the Holocaust accounts of the age, in particular (See Brockmeier). The representation of Beatrice might also be considered as strategic in that it reinforces Sammy’s perception of her as a subhuman, and then establishes the readers’ affinity with the sinfulness of Sammy by allowing them no other perspective of seeing her for what she truly is except his. In fact, the technique might be perceived as all the more crucial once readers come to understand Sammy’s abuse of Beatrice in light of Nazism and the crimes of eugenics. If empathy is withheld because of Sammy’s perception, then Golding can be said to have succeeded in allying readers with the malignancy of Nazism, and in consequence reinforcing his point that the problem of evil is not specific to one race, nation or individual.

Another recurring complaint about the book had to do with the disruption in the chronology of the events despite the fact that this was by now a commonly reiterated modernist technique (Carey, *Golding* 231). It was actually claimed, according to Carey, to have contributed to the difficulty of the novel without serving any particular purpose (234). The flashbacks Sammy engages in are basically an interruption in the present time sequence in which Sammy narrates his tale and are not so different, considering their static nature, from the recollections of Christopher Martin. The difficulty lies, however, in the fact that these flashbacks are not revealed to the reader in a clear chronological order as is the case with *Pincher Martin*, but are rather presented in a confusing scheme where Sammy goes back and forth in time, fully engaging in one episode before he abandons it in search of another. It is possible to detect a clear purpose to the arrangement of the first couple of episodes in the novel, given how they are directed to painting a clear image of ‘the little boy, clear as spring

water,' before they reveal the guilt and burden of the 'stagnant pool' Sammy believes that his adult self to have become (*Fall* 6). As the narrative progresses, however, the organizational scheme starts assuming a less ordered and more chaotic feel that makes it difficult to understand the significance of certain episodes or even pinpoint a clear purpose to the interruption or placement of certain other flashbacks. It might be interesting to note that such disruptions were not originally part of Golding's plan, considering that the earlier version of the novel had more in common with the imposed chronological order employed in *Pincher Martin* than with the published version of *Free Fall* (Carey, *Golding* 229). Still, to state that the disruptions were not intended to aid in communicating Golding's basic premise would be an overstatement. For one thing, divergence from a clear chronological order is noted as a common feature in traumatic narratives, aimed at communicating the inadequacy of the traditional and conventional modes of storytelling in capturing the depth and intensity of the trauma (See Brockmeier 25), or in Golding's and Sammy's case, the war experience. Consequently, it might be possible to note the device as having aided in mirroring Sammy's perception of chaos and loss of order following the traumatic revelation at the Nazi camp, and the disintegration of the distorting pattern that used to invest his world with an illusion of structure and normality. There is also a sense of realism to the reliance on temporal disruptions, inherent in the understanding of time as 'two modes. The one is an effortless perception native to us as water to the mackerel. The other is a memory, a sense of shuffle fold and coil, of that of the day nearer than that because more important' (*Fall* 2). Sammy, in other words, is different from the damned Pincher in that he is an active explorer, licensed for the seemingly erratic, disorganized or chaotic searching of his past in the hopes of establishing some link between his earlier state of innocence, his past crimes and his present condition. As a result, it logically follows that certain moments, along with the truths they hold, can only be revealed after certain other episodes are recalled, a process that is particularly evident in Sammy's capacity to locate the moment when he has lost his innocence only after he has recalled the revelation of the fall in the prison camps (Gregor and Kinkead-Weekes 121).

It should be noted, however, that there might be more to Golding's formal choices than simply that of highlighting the particular aspects of the novel previously explored. In their defence of the novel, Gregor and Kinkead-Weekes suggest that one of the main reasons why *Free Fall* was negatively received is that it was wrongly assumed to be an attempt at writing a social novel (117), a realistic piece of 'modern' fiction (Halio 117), or rather 'a philosophic and symbolic fiction, but still a fiction' nonetheless (Biles, *Talk* 78). Still, the fact that

Golding decided to abandon the artificial conditions of the fable in favour of the more realistic circumstances of the social novel does not mean that *Free Fall* is more concerned with tracing the life of one particular individual rather than using that individual and his life experiences as a commentary on the universal condition of man (Gregor and Kinkead-Weekes 117-8). Each of Golding's previous novels is, in one way or another, an expression of the same dedicated concern with the study of humanity, and *Free Fall* is not that different in that particular regard. Nevertheless, what has contributed to the uniqueness of each individual creation is that Golding had conducted his careful examination of human nature by concentrating on one particular aspect of human existence for each and every one of his projects:

Lord of the Flies gives a grim endorsement to the child as 'father of the man'; *The Inheritors* sees man in relation to the life which preceded him, *Pincher Martin*, in relation to the life that awaits him. What has been carefully excluded is the central relationship of man in relation to man. It is precisely to this subject that Mr. Golding addresses himself in *Free Fall*. The autonomy of the book is not compromised by saying that the three novels which preceded it have created the meaningful space into which it must fit. Inevitably, it takes up and re-orchestrates themes from the earlier novels. *Lord of the Flies* makes its ghost-presence felt in the school-room world; *The Inheritors* in the distinction between 'the innocence' of Johnny Spragge and 'the evil' of Philip Arnold; *Pincher Martin* in Samuel (the chosen one of God) becoming Sammy, using people for his own pleasure, turning the spiritual Beatrice into Miss Ifor, another creation of the murderous self (117).

Free Fall, in other words, is a 'logical culmination' of the past three fables, meant to deliver 'a frontal attack' on a target defined by its predecessors. As a result, it may have seemed sensible for Golding to employ a new plan and a new set of techniques in order to tackle certain notions in a more efficient manner (Gregor and Kinkead-Weekes 116; Baker, *Study* 47). One such notion is the chaos of existence and the futility of forcing artificial patterns upon it which Golding seems to have intended through Christopher's rejection of the 'chaos of death,' and his insistence on hanging on to the 'pattern of civilization' deliberately drawn and imposed on the rock (Golding in Webster 5-6). The fact that this particular notion has often been overlooked, or misinterpreted is claimed by Baker to be another reason why *Free Fall* came to possess its unique form and structure, given how it might have been Golding's way of leading the readers through another process of discovery aimed this time at

mirroring the chaos of existence and the patternlessness of life (Baker, *Study* 56). This would make the disruption in the chronology of events and the subsequent difficulty of finding a connection between Sammy's scattered images not only a reflection of humanity's patternless existence, but also an expression of the resulting incoherence Sammy struggles to communicate, and which exasperates him as much as it exasperates the reader (Baker, *Study* 58; *Fall* 5).¹²²

The decision, of course, did not come without challenges. The struggle with the realism of expressing this particular aspect of human experience necessitated that the work be a reflection of man's patternless existence while simultaneously maintaining its comprehensibility as a fictional construct (Baker, *Study* 56). As a result, it seems that it became necessary for Golding to adopt the first person narrative of a protagonist who possesses an awareness of the futility of the patterns he had adopted over his entire life while still maintaining his need for some semblance of a pattern that would at least include him, 'even if the outer edges tail into ignorance' (Baker, *Study* 56; *Fall* 5-6). This means that both the disruptions in the chronology of events and the reliance on the first person perspective were instrumental in communicating Golding's basic premise. If there are any claimed shortcomings resulting from Golding's reliance on such devices, it remains contestable how much these shortcomings undermine the fulfillment of Golding's goal. Given the cognitive preferences of human intelligence and its orientation towards the kind of narratives that do not necessarily have to conform to the truth, one can develop an understanding to some extent of why *Free Fall* came to receive such a negative reception:

[W]e commonly gravitate toward narratives that we can understand, that have a definite linear structure, that resolve all of the issues they raise, and that make us feel better when we are through. This often describes our fictional narratives, but it rarely describes the world we live in (Austin 79).

¹²² The disruption in the chronology of the events could in a way be interpreted as a rejection of a distorting pattern, an attempt at communicating, as Baker has noted, that 'patternlessness is the only pattern' (Baker, *Study* 58). One cannot deny, however, that the whole construct, despite its attempt to mimic reality, is one of artificiality. For one thing, the disruptions in the sequence of events seem to serve, at a time, another crucial role aside from reinforcing the controlling theme of incoherence and that is of juxtaposing certain elements of Sammy's experience in order to highlight their connection despite their emergence at different points in Sammy's life. This can most clearly be seen in the placement of the flashback depicting Sammy's fear of the dark as a boy and which was made to follow Sammy's imprisonment in the dark cell at the Nazi camp to experience the darkness of mankind's soul. This function also appears to have been Golding's intention behind adding the final scene of the novel which, according to Carey, 'juxtaposes Nick, the good atheist, Miss Pringle, the bad Christian, and Sammy the redeemed sinner' (Carey, *Golding* 231).

Golding's choices, in other words, have not only succeeded to a large extent in mimicking something that might be considered to be closer to the actual reality of the human condition, 'which is often messy complicated and devoid of closure' (79), but have also made it possible, especially through denying the readers a sense of resolution, to create the emotional effect of anxiety crucial to delivering the novel's basic thematic concerns.

In *Free Fall*, Golding raises several questions regarding reality distortions, ideological insufficiency, the moment of the fall, and the possibility of finding a bridge between the spiritual and the rational. As readers come to the end of the novel, however, they find that there are no sufficient answers provided to any of these questions, an observation that is sometimes noted as one of the reasons why the novel was negatively received, and why it was sometimes deemed as a failure compared to its predecessors (McCarron, *Golding* 20; Gregor and Kinhead-Weekes 123-4). It should be noted, however, that *Free Fall* is not as inconclusive as it was made to appear. It does, after all, provide some sense of resolution to one of Sammy's dilemmas by hinting at the moment when he made the decision to sacrifice everything to possess Beatrice as the one defining moment that marked his sinful state of being. This leaves out the solution to Sammy's struggle of finding a bridge between the rational and the spiritual, a problem that is sometimes taken to be Golding's failure based on the belief that successful novels are those that offer a satisfying answer or a semblance of resolution to the issues they raise and tackle (McCarron, *Golding* 20). Still, it is possible to say that the lack of a resolution to this particular problem serves a crucial function in arousing the kind of anxiety that not only internalizes a deeper awareness of the seriousness of the matter, but also awakens an honest desire to find a solution that could adequately bring it to an end. This aspect of the novel is not specific to *Free Fall*, but can be said to be present in all of Golding's past creations, given how none of them actually provides a sense of closure in the conventional sense. In *Lord of the Flies*, the arrival of the naval officer does not fulfil the promise of putting an end to the children's descent to barbarism because the children's war is fought within the context of a bigger and a much more serious war, threatening both to nourish and maintain the moral descent that first manifested itself on the island. A similar sentiment can be found in *The Inheritors* which, despite its hinting at the death of the last remaining Neanderthal, still leaves the reader questioning the prospects for humanity's evolution and the possibility of moral progress. *Pincher Martin* is also similar in not affording closure because it also does not provide a conclusive answer to whether Christopher has accepted the reality of his death, or if he still stubbornly insists on maintaining the existence of his purgatorial rock and whatever remained of his identity. To

put it simply, it is possible to consider the lack of a resolution in *Free Fall* to be instrumental in not only fostering the anxiety the construct has initially evoked with Sammy's questions at the beginning of the novel, but also arousing the kind of awareness that cannot be dismissed or ignored.

Finally, it is important to remember that despite the overt pessimism inherent in Sammy's incapacity to find a bridge, *Free Fall*, in particular, can be considered to be a more optimistic account of the human condition than the previous fables. There is, after all, the implicit indication of a hope for humanity after the fall which Golding communicates through a protagonist with a higher moral sense and a sharper awareness of the reality of existence than his predecessors. It is also important to note that though there may not be a clear solution to the problem within the confines of the novel, 'to be aware of [the] situation,' as Golding once indicated, 'may possibly be, in some ways, a bit of a solution or tending towards a solution' (in Biles, *Talk* 104). This should reflect Golding's assertion that even if he had not shown himself to be the naive sort of optimist, he is 'more optimistic about man than people think' (105), and that if there is anything he believes in, it is that 'the bridge exists' (Golding, 'Nothing'). Sammy and Golding might not have stumbled upon the existence of the bridge, but to have created *Free Fall* to ask this kind of question hopelessly does in a way indicate that 'there is hope' (Golding in Biles, *Talk* 101).

The Noble Savage

In his interview with Carey, Golding suggested that one of the common patterns or misconceptions that people usually create to escape evil or to externalize it in denying its innate reality is the myth of the innocent noble savage whose fall and moral corruption is more the result of some external factors than a kind of an inherent readiness to abandon a virtuous existence and to progress towards a state of malignance (in Carey, 'Talks' 174; Golding in Biles, *Talk* 39-40). As a result, Golding came to dedicate his first two novels to tackling two common fallacies that he believed to be directly connected to this notion. One is more oriented to tracing innocence to an earlier phase of people's lives. The other is focused more on establishing it in archaeological terms through locating it in an ancestral point of history never to be regained or acclaimed (in Biles, *Talk* 40). The method Golding follows for the effective deconstruction of these notions is subtle, yet complex. It dictates that these misconceptions might be first entertained through drawing a representation of a pure existence that is in close adherence to people's beliefs regarding the notion of innocence before it is later brought in sharp contrast with the reality of the fallen nature of man and his

innate sinfulness. This can most clearly be seen in *The Inheritors* where an innocent childlike image is first created to communicate a moral ideal, only to be allocated to a different species whose existence is ironically eradicated by none other than the ancestors people tended to idealize and admire. The same pattern can also be detected in *Lord of the Flies* where common notions of childhood innocence are first employed only to be gradually deconstructed with the children's slow descent into savagery, aggression and violence.

One can see how the shock effect that Golding hoped to create by turning these misconceptions on their head had been highly effective in both cases, especially in *Lord of the Flies* since it involves a stage of human existence that is more accessible to people and that had long been held up as an icon of innocence. When moving to Golding's fourth novel, *Free Fall*, however, a somewhat different image emerges. While the method given in tracing the progression from innocence to sinfulness is still in many ways reminiscent of *The Inheritors* and *Lord of the Flies*, there remains a noticeable change in the manner by which Golding tackles what he once considered to be a comforting myth and a dominant misconception about childhood and humanity. Unlike his past creations, there is now a positive representation of the child that emerges in stark contrast, not only to the adult who reminisces on his lost innocence with a Wordsworthian lament, but also to the vicious children in *Lord of the Flies* whose aggression is evidently intended to highlight humanity's innate capacity for evil. This positive representation might have been something of a gradual conversion on Golding's part seeing that he depicted the Homo Sapiens' child in *The Inheritors* as someone who does not hold the misgivings and suspicions of the rest of her people. In fact, Tanakil is the only member of her tribe who is shown as genuinely capable of establishing a connection with another being and of managing to perceive Liku as more than a demonic existence to be feared and subdued. There is, of course, this one single instance when she shows her aggressive side against Liku for refusing to comply with her wishes. Such a depiction, however, is subtly linked to her mother's aggressive response upon discovering that her daughter had been a bit too trusting of the Neanderthal girl, thereby suggesting that it is the adults' influence that induces children to act in an aggressive manner. This could bring Golding's conception of the fall closer to the biblical representation of it as something that occurs at a later point in life when a serpentine agent tempts man out of a perfect state of innocence into one of sin, violence and aggression. The connection can even be made all the more plausible once these corrupting agents are located within the different worlds of Golding's creations in analogy with the biblical account of the fall and the temptation of Adam and Eve. However, as plausible as such a conclusion may be, it remains

far too simple an interpretation given how it engages cultural and social conditions while downplaying their much more complex interaction with heredity, history and free will.¹²³ In fact, Golding specifically emphasized that though such factors could explain why only certain people find themselves seeking a malignant extreme, it is vital to note that it is the interaction of these factors with ‘all the beastly potentialities of man’ that give them ‘free rein’ (36-9). This may well establish *Free Fall* as Golding’s attempt at highlighting the complexity of the problem of evil given the questions it raises in relation to the possible choices that Sammy would have made had he perhaps found himself in different circumstances, or had he been brought up at a different time when war, uncertainty and scientific rationality did not have that much of an influence on people’s lives. When it comes to Sammy’s innocence as a child, however, a more comprehensive explanation can be provided once a link is established with the evolutionary account of the fall which had been given its most elaborate expression in *The Inheritors*, as previously explained.

To read *Free Fall* in light of *The Inheritors* and its Darwinian account of aggression is once again to establish an association between the beginning of evil, the creation of morality and the emergence of mankind’s rational capacities which Golding had been so adamant in condemning in his past creations. This means that Sammy’s childhood innocence might be explained as an outcome of the near absence of a certain degree of cognitive development that not only allows the adult the capacity to employ reason, exercise free will and assert control, but that also makes it possible to develop some sense of responsibility or perhaps suffer the developmentally advanced emotions of guilt, shame or regret.¹²⁴ A support to such a notion can be found in the fact that the nature Sammy is given as a child is, in many ways, reminiscent of the innocent nature of the less intelligent species in *The Inheritors* whose lack of the complex cognitive capacities that make mankind’s sins possible has rendered them incapable of perceiving evil or of adopting it as means to a selfish end. As a result, they are drawn to a more simplistic worldview that does not involve the externalization of evil, nor does it demand accounting for the complex existential realities that are normally associated with the distressing awareness of its presence in their world. The same simplicity can also be detected in Sammy’s innocent perception as a child which can most clearly be seen in those recollections when he was not gripped by the inexplicable fear of the darkness that Golding usually associates with the gradual loss of innocence and the growing psychological defects

¹²³ Golding’s views on human nature might have been given their most comprehensive expression in his interview with Biles (30-52).

¹²⁴ See Elliot on the development of guilt and moral responsibility in children. Also check Tangney, p. 9.

compromising a once pure vision. Sammy's dreamlike perception, in other words, can be described as a natural outcome of his child self's creating the world in the image of a nature that is as free of the knowledge and understanding of evil as Golding's innocent, naive Neanderthals were (Baker, 'Interview'). The possibility may even be further reinforced by the fact that both the Neanderthal and the child regard their somewhat defective world in an Edenic light that is surely impossible for the rational adult mind to maintain.¹²⁵ It should be stressed, however, that although Golding wanted to emphasize the quality of innocence by engaging common Wordsworthian conceptions of childhood and granting his Rousseauian Neanderthals a childlike mentality, there remain certain essential differences between the two that can most clearly be seen in the fact that the child is not afflicted with the same cognitive limitations as the Neanderthals. Sammy's innocence, in other words, is different to a certain extent because he carries the roots of his adult sinfulness in his child self, making his lack of understanding of evil as a child more of a developmental state of ignorance than an outcome of a deficiency in the intellectual capacities that make evil possible. This can be further reinforced by the statement that Golding made to Carey regarding the notion of original sin where he not only addresses the reasoning behind the positive representation of children that followed *Lord of the Flies*, but also clarifies what his understanding of childhood innocence basically entails:

I think that because children are helpless and vulnerable, the most terrible things can be done by children to children ... without knowing that they are injuring themselves, without knowing that [they are engaging in] an antisocial action – that is ignorance. And we confuse it with innocence. I do myself. But I still think that the root of our sin is there, in the child. As soon as it has any capacity for acting on the world outside, it will be selfish; and, of course, original sin and selfishness – the words could be interchangeable ('Talks' 174).

Golding's conception of the child's tendency towards antisocial actions is eventually revealed to the readers of *Free Fall* as associated with a later stage of development. In fact, it can be detected at the moment when Sammy finds himself dragged into the world of boyhood where violence, aggression and perhaps even guilt are granted a more noticeable presence

¹²⁵ In his interview with Baker, Golding maintained that the Neanderthals have a 'Rousseauesque picture of the universe' because they are 'making it in their own image.' The same principle can be said to apply to the childhood phase in *Free Fall*, given the innocent view that both Johnny and Sammy held of their reality as little boys, and which can be said to have been fully manifested in those scenes at the hospital ward and the general's garden.

than before. For the first time in the novel, now, Sammy is shown as developing with some unfortunate affinities to the children in *Lord of the Flies*, represented in his growing capacity to steal, bully and resort to aggressive behaviour if it means securing the objects he wants or the social recognition that he desires. This definite change which Sammy sorrowfully experiences as ‘a gap between the pictures’ of the child who idolized Evie, and the boy who later becomes devoted to his gang mates, Philip and Johnny, may once again be simply explained in terms of the influence or peer pressure that those two children, or more specifically Philip, exerted on the young naive boy that Sammy was (*Fall* 50). However, although Sammy has marked Philip as the one person who had ‘altered’ his life like nobody else (50), he seems to be aware that there had been some innate cognitive readiness to abandon his innocent rationale-free existence as a child when he found himself at one point facing an inexplicable fear of the dark that was never once part of his earlier childhood (185). This terror or fear of the dark is one of the most commonly recurring themes in Golding’s novels which he admits to have based on his personal recollections of a boyhood spent in an ancient home whose innocent cellars and adjacent graveyard had been particularly distressing to his developing mind (Carey, *Golding* 15; Golding, *Gates* 156-7). As a result, it became ‘a convenient metaphor’ for the child’s reenactment of the fall in *Pincher Martin* where Christopher’s nightmare of running away from the woman in the cellar is supposed to communicate the child’s growing capacity to exercise the gift of choice and to turn away from the irrational mysticism associated with the realm of God and the spirit (Baker, ‘Interview’). Golding’s waking nightmare also appears to be serving a similar function in Sammy’s boyhood, given that it signals some growing understanding of evil and a gradual abandonment of a naivety and a trusting innocence strongly reminiscent of the less intelligent beings whose lack of rational thought is held by Golding to be inextricably connected to their state of innocence. Both Christopher and Sammy, of course, do not provide an account of why and how they came to be gripped by such an irrational fear during the later years of their childhood; the reasoning Golding offers in ‘The Ladder and the Tree’, however, traces these terrors to a growing exercise of logic that had, in his case, forced a hostile presence on the innocent and sunlit ruins the same way the new people had forced a demonic perception on a harmless apelike being who is not even capable of understanding evil or aggression (*Gates* 157).

This should further reinforce the notion that, unlike the biblical account of creation, there are no satanic agents or factors in Golding’s novels that are responsible for tempting mankind out of a perfect state of innocence and luring him into the world of sin, guilt and experience.

It should be stressed, however, that there are almost always catalysts represented in either certain devious characters or uncontrollable circumstances that hasten the moral descent of man, even if he were supposedly constrained by the context of civilization as in the case of Sammy Mountjoy.¹²⁶ This catalyst is given a subtle representation in *Lord of the Flies* in the violent conditions of war that the children were sent on a plane to escape. It can further be linked to the unfortunate presence of the power-hungry Jack and the aggressive Roger who both can be described as more inherently predisposed to seek evil than others. A subtle expression of the catalysts may also be located in *The Inheritors* where some of the actions of the Neanderthals are hinted to have been encouraged by the conflict that the hostile presence of the Homo Sapiens had posed for the innocent species. It can be detected, too, in the example that the violent, corrupt adults were setting for the little Homo Sapien girl, Tanakil. Similarly in *Free Fall*, Sammy manages to spot Philip Arnold—the boy who suffered a lack of affinity at such a young age with the innocent irrationality that marked the childhood of both Sammy and Johnny—as the catalyst that may have hastened Sammy's moral descent, given how he is the first to provide Sammy with the opportunity to gain first-hand experience of guilt and exploitation.

When Sammy first introduces Philip as the biggest influence in his life, he describes him in what may seem a rather sympathetic light given his initial reflection on those particular moments when Philip appears as more of a victim than a villain. He is recalled as a vulnerable boy who 'was always to hand' if somebody 'wanted something to hurt' possibly because he was held in contempt for never being capable of physically defending himself or of standing up to his bullies, even when cornered and beaten like a 'sack' (*Fall* 50). However, although Philip had repeatedly managed to come across as a coward and to fall as a target to the boys' aggressive pranks and games, he was not, Sammy asserts, as 'simple' or helpless as he may initially appear (51). For one thing, we are told that Philip was a 'political philosopher' at such a young age (51). He knew exactly how to manipulate the circumstances

¹²⁶ This explains why some of the interpretive efforts are drawn into reading the novels in light of the biblical account of creation where the temptation of Adam and Eve is mostly highlighted as being an outcome of a satanic agent who had made it his purpose to corrupt the innocent. The Neanderthals' gradual adoption of some understanding of evil, for example, is sometimes drawn in association with the arrival of the Homo Sapiens and their corrupting influence. However, it does not seem that Golding believed in the role of the serpent in the creation and emergence of sin and evil. As I have already shown in my discussion of *The Inheritors*, the Neanderthals would have eventually fallen, even without encountering the hostile presence of their intellectual superiors, had they somehow managed to survive the challenging ecological conditions of the island. *Free Fall* seems to be also concerned with the same notion. The only difference is that it is targeting the fall from innocence in a developmental sense rather than an evolutionary one.

in his favour and to pluck himself out of difficult situations, including sparing himself the constant beating he received without having to rely on the brute force he was never capable of (50-1). This does not necessarily cast him in a bad light. The truth of the matter, however, is that although Philip had always been capable of '[turning] the other cheek' when faced with hostility, according to Sammy, he did not cower away from inflicting pain whenever he found himself in a position of power (51). In fact, Philip is represented as one of those people who relish the presence of violence when it involves someone besides themselves (51). He is even marked as lacking the simplicity, naivety and ignorance of Sammy and Johnny Spragg who, though physically stronger than him, are shown as incapable of resisting the mental grip that Philip has held over them without their realizing it (52). Sammy in his boyish simplicity admits that he thought he had found a 'henchman' in Philip (52). He sadly states, however, that although the 'fists and the glory' were his, he was merely acting as Philip's own 'fool ... clay,' and protection (52). Philip, to put it shortly, is a 'cruel ... clever, [and] complex,' individual who is a 'living example of natural selection,' a parasitical being that is 'as fitted to survive in this modern world as a tapeworm in an intestine' (52).

This may once again bring in the observation that it is Philip who acts as the satanic force struggling to tempt Sammy out of his innocent existence, and who, in the end, aids in keeping Sammy in a state of free fall, given how he is balancing the positive 'pull' exemplified in the presence of the good and simple Johnny (Halio 122). However, although it is possible to see Philip as the 'snake' in Sammy's Edenic childhood world (Aarseth), considering his success in getting Sammy to engage in the altar incident that can only be construed as having been instigated by anyone but a child, there seems to be a deeper purpose to his existence in the novel aside from serving as the external force that brings in the knowledge of exploitation to the clueless Sammy. His rationality, for one thing, is emphasized in more than one way, even as a young boy. And since evil to Golding is associated with the possession and use of intelligence, he can be said to belong hereditarily to a whole unique order that is different from that of the neutral Sammy or the simple Johnny, and that has more in common with the narcissistic Pincher or the domineering Jack. Philip, in other words, exemplifies Golding's belief that it is possible to have people who are not balanced between good and evil, and who are more inherently predisposed to seeking one extreme over another (Golding in Biles, *Talk* 47). Such an aspect is further reinforced by Sammy's observation of him as having 'never [been] a child' (*Fall* 52), thereby denying him the quality of innocence that both Johnny and Sammy possessed despite their mindless capacity to bully and fight. It is also possible to say that the presence of a character such as Philip in the novel may further highlight Golding's

mistrust of politicians ‘no matter how good’ (Golding in Biles, *Talk* 49), considering the fact that it is the little devious ‘Machiavelli,’ described by Sammy as a ‘far more dangerous’ boy than the outward bullies, who grows up to capitalize on his knowledge of people and seize an important governmental position (*Fall* 51-2, 284). This should further tie in *Free Fall* with the political aspect of *Lord of the Flies* given how it highlights Golding’s belief that one of the prominent dilemmas ‘we are faced with ... on the whole [is that] the politician is likely to be a Jack ... [or] at best, a Ralph, [but] never a Simon’ (in Biles, *Talk* 49). One can even regard Philip in light of Jack’s character, despite the lack of overt similarities between the two, because both are evil geniuses who are capable of encouraging or bringing out the worst in people in one way or another when allowed to be in a position of power. This can be said to be particularly evident in the manner in which Philip manages to convince the young Sammy into bullying the younger boys for their fagcards, even stealing them if necessary, or in the way by which he manipulates Sammy into disrespecting the church and spitting on the altar for Philip’s own benefit. Interestingly, however, although Philip had definitely succeeded in familiarizing the young Sammy with the knowledge of exploitation through exploiting him for his personal gains and through introducing Sammy to the means by which he could use and manipulate others, Sammy still insists that that particular point of his life does not mark the moment of his moral or spiritual fall.

For Aarseth, Sammy’s mistakes as a boy are supposed to stand for the child’s unconscious reenactment of the fall which is eventually followed by the adult’s conscious freedom to succumb at one point or another to his evil tendencies rather than choose to act otherwise. This much had already been hinted at, as previously explained, in both *Pincher Martin* and ‘The Ladder and the Tree’. It can even be sensed in the distressing awareness of guilt induced in the young Sammy by the head teacher’s involvement in the fagcard incident (*Fall* 55). However, although these particular moments of Sammy’s childhood do signal a moral regression of sorts, there remains an assertion that the ‘insufficiency and guilt’ of the Rotten Row boy are not Sammy’s simply because Sammy does not perceive the child as still being a part of his adult self (76). This affirms, as Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor have observed, the ‘sheer gulf’ existing between the unconscious child and the sinful adult, and that each resides in a state of being that is markedly different from that of the other (173). It is also possible to maintain that while the existential dimension of the argument is plausible, the change can be associated with the eventual cognitive maturity that denies the adult the kind of innocence, or rather ignorance, associated with the child’s lack of autonomy and the subsequent absence of a more realistic or haunting expression of guilt and responsibility. Childhood, in other words,

cannot be the point Sammy is searching for because it does not mark the beginning of the intellectual competence that makes morality, choice and responsibility possible. Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor also propose a similar argument, stating that despite the unintentional transgressions of the child, there is still an evident absence of ‘calculation, choice, responsibility, and without these there is lacking a dimension essential to evil and guilt. Philip has it, but that is why he is never a child’ (173). Moreover, Babb suggests that one of the reasons why Sammy’s mistakes as a child do not ‘mark Sammy spiritually’ is that he was ‘rather acting under Philip’s influence than exercising his personal freedom to choose deliberately’ (116). This should grant a whole new dimension to Sammy’s explanation of why he does not feel accountable for his childhood mistakes. But can the lack of autonomy really be one of the crucial aspects of the ‘threshold’ which Sammy believes to have enabled him to evade responsibility as a child (*Fall* 6)?

Asserting that a child cannot be held accountable for his actions based on the observation that children are, for the most part, incapable of perceiving the long-term consequences of their actions seems like the most plausible conclusion in Sammy’s condition. One reason why this might be the case is Golding’s belief in the child’s state of ignorance, and how it is mostly associated with standard notions of innocence, as previously mentioned. When it comes to the issue of autonomy, however, denying the child’s freedom does not seem to carry the same weight in the freedom to fall argument mainly because childhood is the lamented phase that serves as the point of comparison against which Sammy is measuring his fading experiential and existential sense of freedom. Still, it is important to keep in mind that while the adult does seem to be overly occupied with a loss in one way or another, a notion that sceptics may simply dismiss as being an illusion, his lack of freedom cannot be regarded in the same manner as that of the little boy.¹²⁷ Children, for one thing, lack the cognitive maturity that allows them the adequate resistance to certain external pressures such as poverty, parental or adult authority, and peer influence (Elliott). And while certain factors or figures may definitely be considered to have a positive impact on the development of the child’s moral character such as the head teacher in Sammy’s case, others may balance or

¹²⁷ Positions regarding the controversial notion of free will can roughly be divided into four categories. One is the eliminativist’s position which basically denies free will altogether. Another is the libertarian position which argues for an opposing extreme and deems ‘indeterminist free will’ as possible. There is also the incompatibilist view which basically deems free will as irreconcilable with a deterministic universe. And most importantly, there is the compatibilist view which basically considers free will as possible in a deterministic universe (Nichols 10-11). Given Golding’s views in *Free Fall* regarding free will, guilt and responsibility, his orientation towards the religious and his somewhat deterministic conception of human nature, it might be safe to say that he was most probably a compatibilist.

override the benign influence with their negative presence. There is also the fact that children are not governed by the internal constraints necessary to keep bad behaviour in check; nor are they in possession of a fully developed moral sense or a deeply ingrained set of ideals or rules against which they can measure and plan their actions or make proper choices (Elliott; Barrett 77).¹²⁸ Golding actually maintained in his interview with Keating that one of the reasons why the boys' society breaks down in *Lord of the Flies* is that children are 'too young to look ahead and really put the curbs on their own nature and implement them' as opposed to adults (190). This explains why Sammy's first experience of guilt is represented as having been externally induced rather than solely motivated by an internal moral compass. It also explains why Sammy as a child is shown as never capable of resisting the influence of Philip who is represented as the malevolent comrade capitalizing on Sammy's poverty, his sense of inferiority and his lack of a father figure in order to manipulate him into the immoral acts of stealing and bullying.¹²⁹

This may initially put the adult at an advantage, especially since he is supposed to be in possession of the cognitive maturity that should aid him in overcoming most of the obstacles keeping the child from exercising freedom of choice. However, it is important to note, as Sammy has clearly maintained, that although the limitations on freedom present themselves rather externally in the child's case, they do so more internally or 'mentally' in the case of the adult: 'I was still the child from Rotten Row and if I had no freedom it was taken away physically not mentally' (*Fall* 179). Such types of authority can be covert, subtle, and complex, and since they are hardly perceived or detected as limitations, they are capable, under certain conditions, of having debilitating effects to a much higher extent than external authority (Fromm, *Escape* Ch. 5). Interestingly enough, most of these limitations emerge for Sammy as a consequence of his adoption of a system, making it possible to conclude that Sammy's loss of freedom might, after all, be inextricably connected to the cognitive maturity that makes identity, guilt and freedom of choice possible, and that necessitates, as such, the adoption of an ideology or a worldview.

¹²⁸ This may in a sense bring Sammy closer to the Neanderthals whose lack of the cognitive complexity that makes autonomy possible has rendered them incapable of resisting the external stimuli in their surroundings. However, while the lack of freedom in the Neanderthal's case contributes to maintaining their innocence due to their essential goodness, it mainly absolves the child of the responsibility for any of his or her misdeeds.

¹²⁹ 'Philip commiserated, *rubbed in my poverty* [emphasis added]; pointed out the agony of my choice—never to have any more kings of Egypt or else exchange those I had for others and thus lose the first ones for good. I toughed Philip up mechanically for insolence but knew he was right' (*Fall* 53). This shows Philip as capable of using Sammy's poverty and sense of inferiority to talk him into resolving his problem by stealing.

Identity Construction and the Psychological Function of Ideologies

One of the most notable engagements with the matter of freedom in the aftermath of the Second World War is that of Erich Fromm's *Escape from Freedom*, which was mainly dedicated to exploring humanity's complicated relationship with the notion in the hopes of developing some understanding of why most individuals willingly give it away. Fromm, whose views Golding is reported to have been made familiar with, particularly in relation to the biblical fall (Carey, *Golding* 122), maintains that because man is the only animal who manages to disrupt his harmonious animal existence by breaking free from the control of nature and his instincts, he is the only animal who is left to suffer a load of psychological and existential burdens from which he could never run or escape (*Sane Society* 22-5). One particularly daunting problem is that of freedom which, though it generally represents a kind of desired state that people are usually willing to fight for, still holds the threat of compromising people's sense of identity and of disrupting their conventional guides for action (Fromm, *Sane Society* 56, 65; McGregor 187-8). Children, of course, are not usually gripped by such concerns because they do not yet exist as individuals, capable of setting themselves apart from the world they occupy and of compromising the 'primary bonds' that defines their existence in terms of the parental figures or prominent individuals in their surroundings (*Escape* Ch. 2). Consequently, it is only when they have reached a state of individuation that they begin to seek some means by which they can reduce the burden of drifting in an absurd world that 'does not provide a priori guidance about what kind of person to be' (McGregor 187), and to willingly sentence themselves to some form of overt or covert imprisonment, mostly without realizing it (Fromm, *Escape* Ch. 4). One particularly dangerous form of imprisonment is that of 'anonymous authority,' represented in the invisible control of 'common sense, science...normality, public opinion' and rationality which, according to Fromm, can be difficult to fight because 'it does not demand anything except the self-evident' and 'it seems to use no pressure but only mild persuasion' (Ch. 5). Golding also appears to be offering a similar argument in *A Moving Target* where he tackles the erection of 'cages of iron bars' and the 'mental straightjacket's of Darwinism, Marxism and Freudianism as the kind of price people have to pay for the benefits gained from the development of the human intellect (186). This allows readers, as Fromm had done, to consider the problem in a biological frame and to conceive its universality as well as its possible eventuality.

There is, however, some cultural and social specificity to the problem, represented in

Fromm's engaging in the notion out of the desire to understand the kind of circumstances that fostered the emergence of fascism in Germany. It can also be detected in Golding's characterization of Sammy in a manner that hints at the atrocities of Nazism as well as critiques what Crawford considered to be the left and right wing totalitarianism of the time (85). In fact, Crawford seems to believe the subtle link that ties Sammy's sins to his adolescence to be particularly significant, considering how it might have been Golding's way of hinting at the youthful aspect of fascist and totalitarian regimes, and how it is easy for dictators to manipulate adolescents into supporting their seemingly heroic, yet destructive cause (57, 107). Sammy's adolescence can also be considered as echoing the kind of observation Fromm made in relation to Nazism in *Escape from Freedom*, a matter which was later psychologically tackled as possibly associated with a state of 'personal uncertainty' or 'a kind of identity crisis,' resulting in the growing need to develop a clear conception of who one is before one is capable of taking the defined identity as a 'guide for action' (McGregor 188, 200). After all, it is with adolescence that individuals gain a heightened access to the cognitive complexity necessary for the emergence of 'identity versus role confusion,' and for the understanding of 'wholeness, unity and integration' as gripping identity problems that demand resolution (McAdams 188-90). Moreover, Golding can be said to be specifically targeting the problem as particularly daunting to the war generation given his choice to abandon the universal setting of the fable and to opt, instead, for reflecting the conditions of uncertainty, doubts and ambiguities of the war years. The switch to the social setting might have also been crucial in that it helps reinforce the connection between the inevitability of the problem of validating identity and the increasing intellectual, cultural and economic liberation of man that distinctively began with the rise of modernism.¹³⁰

According to Golding, Sammy's state of uncertainty is supposed to mirror that of the 'model intellectual of the twentieth century' who finds himself in a state of 'free fall,' so to speak, due to his not being capable of attaining the gravitational pull or guidance made possible by the adoption of a system or a pattern (in Biles, *Talk* 81). Science, after all, had struck down most of the 'old supports' and systems (in Baker, 'Interview'), leaving individuals no choice but to either confront the terror of alienation, aimlessness and uncertainty, or to seek some other means or patterns by which these overwhelming aspects of one's existence may be masked. One solution that Sammy is represented as having opted for is that of group conformity or of joining the Communist party, a decision which though it

¹³⁰ See Fromm, *Sane Society* 60. Also consider McGregor 187 and McAdams 189

may simplistically be dismissed as in keeping with the conditions of poverty that marked Sammy's childhood at Rotten Row, is still not as simple as it may initially seem. In fact, although Sammy admits to having developed an interest in politics due to the influence of Nick Shales (106), he does not appear to be as committed to the Marxist ideals as might be expected. The group he joins, for one thing, is not represented as particularly interested in politics as much as it is concerned with the pursuit of freedom in a sexual sense (*Fall* 101; Babb 105). There is also the fact that among the teachers, students and librarians who make up the majority of the Communist party, there are no members of the working classes save for one individual who has ironically joined for no other reason but to '[advance] himself socially' (*Fall* 106). Sammy's lack of political commitment may further be detected in the admission that his becoming a communist at the time was simply an outcome of his looking for 'the social security of belonging to the tribe' (*Fall* 246), and that had it not been 'for Miss Pringle's nephew who now was high up in the blackshirts,' he would have been a blackshirt himself (106). This presents the adolescent Sammy as experimenting with Marxist thinking for purposes not strictly political, a tendency which according to Fromm is highly common given its role in ameliorating one's sense of alienation and in defining the parameters by which one's identity can be constructed (*Sane Society* 26).¹³¹ Despite these benefits, however, detectable in Sammy's confession of having experienced 'a sense of martyrdom and a sense of purpose' in 'being a communist' (139), there remains the risk of distortion previously addressed and associated with the reductive tendencies of such systems, and how they normally deny the aspects of human experience that cannot be reconciled or accommodated with their vision (Golding in Biles, *Talk* 103). There is also the malignant possibility that given the right social and historical conditions, some of these espoused systems are highly likely to result in dangerous biases, narcissistic tendencies and immoral outcomes such as those created by fundamentalist ideologies in general, and the Stalinist or Nazi regimes in particular (Golding in Biles, *Talk* 36-9; McGregor 187).¹³²

In *Escape from Freedom*, Fromm contends that one of the prominent reasons why Nazism

¹³¹ Such views were later expounded upon by McGregor who believes that even people in individualistic cultures may find themselves looking up to the group and adopting its views, 'narratives' and 'ideals' as a means of resolving their personal uncertainty because groups are capable of providing 'a template for self-construction' that 'reduces the need for self-analysis and deliberation' (192). Groups are also capable of bolstering an individual's sense of self-worth, purpose and control by helping the individual define a clear set of values and goals which might then be pursued following an 'internalized guide' for action made possible by the group's own behavioural templates (192).

¹³² In fact, Crawford notes that Sammy's decision of adopting Communism is a way for Golding to critique the Communist Party of Great Britain, highlight the atrocities of Stalinism as well as show how such systems, just like that of Nazism, can appear equally appealing to 'totalitarian' personalities, Sammy's included (104-5).

was not met with widespread rejection from the German people, especially the younger generation, is the promise it held of promoting self-worth and restoring national pride for a population that had been so markedly overcome with anxiety and uncertainty in the aftermath of the First World War that it was willing to give into a leader such as Hitler (Ch. 6). A similar argument was proposed by Golding in an interview with Biles where he particularly blames the war for the emergence of the kind of psychological conditions of uncertainty and inferiority that allowed Hitler the control of the German people and the creation of Nazism, especially in the absence of the sense of social identity that could have helped in managing the problem or in toning it down (37-8). Fromm also argues that the control of a person, a group or an ideology may initially appear helpful in masking or reducing man's sense of aimlessness and isolation because it does target some of the immediate manifestations of the existential and psychological concerns of the individual. However, given how the root cause continues to be inadequately diagnosed or addressed, the promises of security and freedom that such systems or figures of authority hold remain false and delusive (*Escape* Ch. 6). This can, in fact, be clearly seen in the adolescent Sammy's misguided conception of freedom or his 'absurd declaration of independence,' following his adoption of Communism, which ironically involves 'behaving as much as Alsopp,' the leader of the Communist party at the time, 'as possible' (*Fall* 101). The problem can also be detected in the development of Sammy's pathological obsession with Beatrice, considering the existential dimension to the relationship which can be targeted as still betraying a desire to overcome a maddening state of uncertainty and alienation through controlling another individual and gaining a semblance of meaning out of the newly attained sense of dependency and power.

Though Golding did not generally confirm any existential influence on his writings, particularly when it came to his engagement with the matter of identity in *Pincher Martin*, and later on *Free Fall*, the existential dimension to Sammy's relationship with Beatrice cannot be denied. After all, most of the interactions, interrogations as well as the questions that Sammy recalls subjecting the innocent Beatrice to are shown as centred on gripping identity matters that are difficult if not impossible to address: 'How far do you extend? Are you the black, central patch which cannot examine itself? Or do you live in another mode, not thought, stretching out in serenity and certainty?' (117). They are also depicted as initially aimed at understanding Beatrice and resolving the mystery of her being, possibly for the purpose of attaining a sense of existential sharing which given the reality of the human condition, the limitations inherent in our means of communication, and the difficulty of accessing another person's experiential sense of the world, can never be fully realized or can

only be attained as an illusion. Sammy's interrogation of Beatrice, in other words, is surely presented by Golding as a desperate attempt to break free from a state of phenomenological isolation, to promote a sense of existential connectedness, to attain 'fusion and identity,' and 'to understand and to be understood' (117). The more Beatrice denies him those needs, the more he becomes assertive in his interrogation of her and the more he grows obsessive over matters like her identity, femininity, her state of being, and how the world presents itself to her: 'What is it like to hold the centre of someone's universe, to be soft and fair and sweet, to be neat and clean by nature, to be desired to distraction, to live under this hair, behind these huge, unutterable eyes?' (115). After all, existential isolation can be one of the most daunting and anxiety-arousing conditions to be deemed as inevitable or inescapable to an extent because it involves the individual's sense of their personhood or identity and the fact that there are aspects of one's existence that can never be fully shared or accessed by others.¹³³ This is perfectly captured by Sammy at the beginning of his narrative where he not only fixates on the failure of art in fully communicating his experience, but also expresses the reality of an existence where an individual is doomed to alienation and condemned to be free. Like Edwin in *Darkness Visible* (1979) who believes humanity to be 'wrapped in delusions and illusions,' and to be 'mad and in solitary confinement' (280), Sammy holds that:

[w]e are dumb and blind yet we must see and speak. ... Our loneliness is the loneliness not of the cell or the castaway; it is the loneliness of the dark thing that sees as at the atom furnace by reflection, feels by remote control and hears only words phoned to it in a foreign tongue. To communicate is our passion and our despair (4).

Golding's representation of Sammy's desire to attain a sense of unity with Beatrice may initially be perceived as in keeping with the common conception of close relationships as the most 'basic' and fundamental means of attaining a sense of meaningful existence.¹³⁴ After all, they do precede the emergence of other defence mechanisms, including cultural and ideological ones, in both a developmental and an evolutionary sense, given their early expression in infancy as well as their undeniable manifestation in the animal kingdom (Mikulincer, Florian and Hirschberger 302). The problem with Sammy, however, is that his relationship is not only shown as a dysfunctional one that does nothing to pluck him out of his state of alienation, but is also revealed as the one sin that further compromises his sense of

¹³³ See Pyszczynski, Greenberg and Koole 6-7; Pinel et. al. 359.

¹³⁴ See Mikulincer, Florian and Hirschberger 295, 302; Pinel et. al. 362.

freedom and that tortures him with guilt, shame and regret his entire life. Like Christopher, who gains definition by devouring or stepping over the bodies of those whom he has exploited, Sammy eventually comes to forcefully seek 'unity and substantial identity' through pressuring Beatrice into 'sexual sharing,' or rather exploitation, using the promise of marriage as a means to that particular end (*Fall* 132).¹³⁵ As much as such an episode helps in reinforcing Sammy's state of sinfulness, however, it is not hinted at as the moment that marks his fall because he is shown as having already made the decision to possess Beatrice sexually and 'to make [whatever] appropriate sacrifice' necessary for that to happen (267). This not only reinforces Sammy's affinities with Pincher Martin, but also helps highlight the religious, and by association evolutionary, dimension of the novel, represented in Sammy incurring the sin of pride, much like the despicable Pincher, and entering a state of self-deification or selfishness which Golding considers to be humanity's original sin.¹³⁶ In fact, Christopher and Sammy are similar in that their crimes are sexual in nature, a matter that Golding reinforces by highlighting their perverse conception of love and by associating their perception of sex, much like that of Golding's other characters, with the notion of eating. Christopher, for example, is a predatory being whose conscious recollection of his victimization and sexual exploitation of others is represented as providing him with more assurance 'in his knowledge of the cosmic nature of eating' and in his existence as a successful maggot (*Pincher* 89). The association between sex and exploitation can also be detected in *The Inheritors* where Tuami

¹³⁵ The only problem, however, is that the gulf that Sammy perceives as dividing him from Beatrice can in no way be bridged through sex or a physical union, not only because she was rendered 'impotent' by her upbringing, but also because she was brought up in the kind of security that makes it difficult for her to understand the complex doubts and existential burdens afflicting the young Sammy (134, 124). This could provide more explanation as to why Sammy, and by association Pincher, are shown to experience feelings of jealousy over their obsessions' state of being. Both Beatrice and Mary enjoy an existence that is free of the kind of anxieties and psychological concerns targeting Christopher and Sammy due to their beliefs and their state of spiritual relatedness. This can be reinforced by Sammy's observation that Beatrice's 'innocence was an obedient avoidance of the deep and muddy pool where others lived. Where I lived' (125). There is also the suggestion that Beatrice 'was at peace' because, contrary to him, she had the 'chapel with its assurances... behind her' (124). It is also possible to conclude that the instinctual goodness of both characters might have been an additional reason that aggravated both Sammy and Pincher, given Sammy's admission to having once been in a similar situation to that of Miss Pringle who hated Nick because 'he found it easy to be good' (241). Finally, it is important to note that both points are intricately associated with the problem of existential isolation and how both Pincher and Sammy are incapable of understanding the objects of their obsession, not only because their worldview denies the mystical, but also because they belong to a whole different state of being from that of Mary and Beatrice.

¹³⁶ Although Golding maintained that it was the scientific undertones that he had in mind when he decided to go for the title, *Free Fall*, considering how it helps in communicating his basic idea about freedom, he did not mind the religious interpretation because he did engage with such matters in the novel (Golding in Biles, *Talk* 81). In fact, it is possible to see the religious and by association the evolutionary interpretation of Sammy's fall as subsuming the scientific one because it is with the emergence of the self and the beginning of the process of individuation that humanity is sentenced to a state of self-centredness or selfishness which Golding regards as humanity's original sin. It is also with the emergence of the self and individuality that humanity comes to perceive the existential burdens of isolation, alienation and freedom.

is perceived by the innocent Lok as ‘not only lying with the fat woman but eating her as well’ (175). Similarly, Sammy describes the experience of sex in the Communist party as ‘a little furtive pleasure like handing round a bag of toffees’ before he eventually comes to objectify Beatrice brutally and before he abandons her for a fellow communist member named ‘Taffy’ (*Fall* 101).

This may initially show Golding as attempting to communicate the notion of sexual experiences being a sin, especially given his continued engagement with the matter in his subsequent novels, particularly *The Pyramid*, *Rites of Passage* (1980) and *The Paper Men*. Golding strictly maintains, however, that he does ‘believe and know that love-making can be enhancing,’ thereby emphasizing the notion that it is ‘the exploitation, not the sex’ that is ‘sinful,’ and that a ‘diseased situation’ is only possible once power ‘takes over in a sexual relationship’ (Biles, *Talk* 111; Haffenden 116; Baker, ‘Interview’). He clearly notes to Baker that Sammy’s abuse of Beatrice is an attempt to highlight the potentially negative and drastic outcomes of close relationships, and how they can be a ‘dangerous... human position [that] could go wrong more easily than any other’ because they almost always involve ‘people putting themselves in each other’s power’ (Baker, ‘Interview’). This difficulty of selfless love seems to echo that of Fromm, who though he expresses belief that human relations can provide some constructive means of dealing with one’s existential condition (*Sane Society* 30-1), still maintains that not every notion of love and not every attempt at establishing a human relation is as constructive, selfless, and genuine as is claimed to be (32-5).

As previously stated, the difficulty of maintaining selfless relations can be found in the inherent selfishness of the human race, a matter which Golding addresses in most of his novels, especially his early fables, through establishing the biological roots of humanity’s ailments and tracing their development back to their evolutionary genesis. When it comes to *Free Fall*, however, Golding seems to be more invested in locating the problem in the social and cultural conditions, and in linking it with the violence of the war as well as the political and existential climate of the age. In an interview with Frank Kermode, Golding maintained that the relationship between Sammy and Beatrice is supposed to be ‘a twentieth century equivalent of the Dante and Beatrice story’ in *La Vita Nuova* (qtd. in Carey, *Golding* 226). It is a collection of poems that follows on the courtly love tradition in recounting Dante’s encounter and falling in love with his Beatrice, and how that experience resulted in the elevation of Dante’s life to hers. As a result, it came to be regarded as one of the important sources that inspired the creation of *Free Fall* and that provided the model that was basically reversed and turned on its head for the purpose of depicting the ‘obsessive’ and ‘pathological’

nature of Sammy's affection, as opposed to the purity and innocence of Dante's devotion (*Fall* 131).¹³⁷ It should be stressed, however, that although Golding had confessed to there being an association between Dante's love story and his, it does not appear that the reversal was aimed this time at exposing the inadequacy or inaccuracy of the views expressed by the source's creator, as in most of Golding's earlier novels. According to McCarron, it is Golding's *Free Fall* this time, or rather Sammy's pathological infatuation with Beatrice, that is held as 'inferior' to the source. This makes it possible to conclude that whatever commonalities the plot shares with Dante's *La Vita Nuova*, they were most likely meant to highlight the extent of Sammy's selfish exploitation as opposed to the selflessness of Dante's devotion (*Golding* 19). It is also possible to conclude that given the age's absorption in the cruelty, viciousness and savagery of war, Golding may have wanted to highlight how it is possible for human relations to take on morbid manifestations and for people to find themselves 'caught in the terrible net where ... [the] guilty are forced to torture each other' (*Fall* 284). This can, in fact, be detected at an early stage of the novel in the departure from the elegance of Dante's poetry and the gracefulness marking his expression of love for his Beatrice to the intensity and violence of Sammy's emotions. Rather than filling him with a sense of transcendence, Sammy's proclaimed affection compels him, as he makes his way to see Beatrice, to will the people standing in his way 'to die, be raped, bombed or otherwise obliterated' (*Fall* 87). The effects of the age can also be detected in the subtle association that Golding draws between Sammy's abuse of Beatrice and the atrocities of Nazism or eugenics. They are implicit, as Crawford notes, in the questions that Sammy raises in relation to Beatrice's humanity, and in his coming to describe her at a later point of their relationship as 'more dog-like' as a way of implying her subhuman status (Crawford 110-11; *Fall* 135, 137-8). Such an association, states Crawford, is later reinforced by an image of a catatonic Beatrice, locked in asylum and regarded as an animal in much the same way as the handicapped girl, Minnie. This mentally challenged girl from Sammy's childhood is also conferred the status of an animal for urinating on the inspector's shoes before she is later escorted out of the school, never to be seen again, in a manner that resonates with the victims of the Holocaust (*Fall* 34-5; Crawford 110). Beatrice's fate, in other words, is in keeping with an age defined by the crimes of eugenics and the extermination of the unfit, a notion that Sammy asserts when he notes the simple, kind, and loving nature of Beatrice and many others as unfortunate in a sense, given how it does not hold much 'political importance,'

¹³⁷ See S. Boyd 65; Medcalf 26; McCarron 18-9; Carey, *Golding* 226-7.

allow its 'owners much success,' or even keep them from being victimized in a materialistic and vicious world that has neither the capacity, nor the understanding for spiritual truths or relatedness (*Fall* 215).¹³⁸

There are moments, of course, when Sammy's love appears in a manner that may be deemed to be Dantean, considering the religious overtones that pervade his proclamations of affection towards the simple Beatrice. This helps, to a certain extent, in bringing a semblance of genuineness to his love for her:

I was trembling regularly from head to foot as if my button had been pressed. There in the winter sunlight, among the raindrops and rusted foliage I stood and trembled regularly as if I should never stop and a sadness reached out of me that did not know what it wanted; for it is part of my nature that I should need to worship, and this was not in the textbooks, not in the behaviour of those I had chosen and so without knowing I had thrown it away (121).

Such moments, however, do not seem to be aimed at highlighting Sammy's affinity with the Italian poet as much as they are meant to draw attention to the moral and spiritual sterility of the age as well as the pathological aspect of Sammy's love. Reliance on poetic and religious overtones, for one thing, measures the extent to which Sammy's perception of Beatrice has sunk. It helps grant her the status of a goddess worthy of worship before she is later shown as having been reduced to a dog forced into a sadomasochistic reliance and robbed of her own state of independences, freedom and integrity.¹³⁹ It also helps highlight Sammy's condition of imprisonment as that of a deification and idolatrous worship, not of Beatrice whom Sammy claims to have sought to idolize at one point of his life, but of the self, its obsessions and sexual urges. This can be said to have been reinforced by Sammy's perception of his world as 'a savage place in which man was trapped without hope, to enjoy what he could while it was going' (256). Moreover, reliance on religious overtones seems to signal a lamented and

¹³⁸ In fact, Golding seems to have a tendency to have his innately good characters such as Nat and Simon killed perhaps to prove this very same point which he initially made in *The Inheritors* through the extermination of the innocent Neanderthals.

¹³⁹ It is interesting that as poetic as the conception of Beatrice as a goddess is, it shows Sammy as having been blinded to her true being from the very beginning, a conclusion which Sammy reinforces at one point by wondering if his perception of her is simply an instance of the 'mind's self-deception' (143). He even adds that: '[h]ad all young men been as I, the ways where she went would have been crowded' (104). This is perhaps another factor why he is shown as having never been capable of establishing a genuine connection with her. In fact, his initial perception of her as a goddess is what might have possibly led to the disappointment that followed, and that eventually culminated in his deteriorating perception of her as a dog. This further blinds him to Beatrice's true nature and forces him into perceiving her as nothing more than a body to be objectified and exploited for his own pleasure until the moment he meets Taffy, the fellow communist whom he ends up falling in love with and abandoning Beatrice for.

mourned loss of religiousness and a subsequent conversion to a rationalistic and egocentric extreme that is targeted by Golding as contributing to the victimization of Beatrice. The loss is, in fact, represented as having promoted the abandonment of morality and the adoption of the moral relativity that allows Sammy to justify his exploitation of Beatrice and to put his abuse in perspective. As a result, it might be possible to conclude that Golding might have been in agreement with Fromm regarding his view of the twentieth century as ‘a peculiarly inhospitable environment for morality and virtue’ (Baumeister and Exline; Fromm, *Escape* Ch. 4). The two can also be said to be similar in that they both trace this problem to the regression of ‘humanistic religions,’ as opposed to the rise of the spirit of individualism, consumerism and capitalism that Golding is later seen to be critiquing viciously in *Darkness Visible* and *The Paper Men* (qtd. in Batson and Stocks 152; Fromm, *Sane Society* 342).¹⁴⁰ After all, it is with the complex interplay of such factors that the pursuit of individual interests is encouraged to a point that used to be deemed as sinful by Christianity. It is also possible to regard the same factors as responsible for the promotion of individuality and self-actualization to a level that makes it ‘difficult for morality to retain its traditional function of restraining the self’ (Baumeister and Exline; Geyer and Baumeister 412; Fromm, *Sane Society* 160).¹⁴¹ This should further explain the difference between the pathology of Sammy’s feelings and the purity of Dante’s affections as having been brought about by the influence of the kind of historical and social conditions that governed the lives of both protagonists and that contributed, in one way or another, to shaping them into the kind of person they turned out to be.

This may show Golding as attempting to explore the view that while interpersonal

¹⁴⁰ The same conclusion had also been proposed by social psychologists Baumeister and Exline regarding the role of religion in promoting ethics and how the regression in morality in the modern world might be traced to a number of factors that include, but are not limited to, ‘the secularization of society and... the loss of the spiritual context’ that makes selflessness, virtue and morality possible. In fact, they consider religion to be an important element in the process of self-regulation or the control of the ‘moral muscle’ since it helps in regularly exercising it, and in consequently allowing it to grow stronger (Baumeister and Exline; Geyer and Baumeister 412). Religion, after all, offers a ‘framework that supports self-control,’ especially given its perspective on what classifies as virtues or vices, and how most, if not all, of these notions are constructed in terms of the success and failure of self-control (Geyer and Baumeister 412)

¹⁴¹ It is possible to interpret the effects of moral relativity on freedom in terms of a serious disruption in the process of ‘self-regulation’ whose failure is believed to be equally dependent on the breakdown of any of its closely interlinked components, including moral standards, self-monitoring, and the capacity to modify behaviour (Baumeister and Exline). This means that if some people were to lose their values or ideals, for instance, as in the case of Sammy, they would no longer find it possible to keep their behaviour in check or to alter it in an acceptable manner because they would basically lose the ideals against which behaviour is to be measured, maintained or modified (Baumeister and Exline). In other words, the adoption of a rational extreme, in Sammy’s case, has not only engendered the rejection of the moral standards that are normally associated with religious belief, but also resulted in the loss of one of the basic components that are necessary for the development of virtue and for the exercise of control over the self and its egocentric tendencies.

connectedness is not at all impossible in the absence of religion, it may be difficult to maintain as an effective and non-exploitative means of quelling one's psychological and existential burdens because it is religion, suggests Golding, that provides one of the necessary components for the expression, maintenance or development of morality.¹⁴² In fact, such a conclusion can help justify the arrangement of Sammy's episodes, to a certain extent, given how it explains why Sammy is shown as continuing the search for the moment that marked his abandonment of religiousness, even after locating the episode which he suspects to have marked his fall and loss of freedom. One reason why Sammy's loss of religiousness is not targeted as the moment of his fall, despite Golding's depicting the repercussions of such a decision as particularly dreadful in his protagonist's case, is that Sammy does not believe that 'rational choice stood any chance of exercise' at the time (*Fall* 245). He is shown then, after all, as having been a young boy whose innocent mind is incapable of keeping the miraculous world which he believes to have inhabited by nature from being distorted by the cruelty of its proponent, Miss Pringle, and the fact that she did not find it at all reprehensible to torture and 'crucify a small boy' (236). Sammy may also be deemed as justified in rejecting the religious realm as a child given his incapacity at the time to see each world for what it actually is and to perceive the problem as anything more than a simple 'choice between good and wicked fairies' (245). The fact that Sammy's decision is presented in terms of the manner by which each worldview is depicted seems further to reinforce the notion that Sammy cannot be deemed as fallen at that particular point because it is 'Nick's instinctive goodness' that he is represented as having chosen, rather than 'the tortured and torturing spinster' whose cruelty came to be inextricably associated with the worldview she is advocating (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 187-8).

This should help absolve Sammy of some of the responsibility of breaking the helpless Beatrice and of possibly driving her to madness by showing Sammy's spiritual parents, Rowena Pringle and Nick Shales, as 'part reasons' for why the adolescent Sammy ended up the way he is (*Fall* 241). After all, it appears to be Miss Pringle's wretched crucifixion of the young boy of Rotten Row that results in the emergence of the destructive association between the notions of sex and religion on the one hand, and the negative emotions of hate, guilt and shame on the other. It is also the rationalism of Nick Shales that is targeted as having indirectly allowed for the abuse of Beatrice, considering its role in drawing Sammy into the full adoption of rationalism and the kind of relativist morality that deems notions of good and

¹⁴² See Golding's views on religion and morality in Biles, *Talk* 85.

evil as manmade or ‘decided by majority vote’ (218).¹⁴³ This means that although Sammy is shown as having hinted at the moment when he made the decision to pursue Beatrice as the one moment when he had allowed himself to succumb to his fallen nature and to give up his freedom wilfully without realizing what the decision may entail, such a moment cannot be simplistically labelled as the moment of his fall. In fact, it might be a little misleading to perceive Sammy’s tragic loss of both freedom and innocence as anything but a gradual process that has come about as a result of accumulated choices, shaped by the social, economic and political conditions as much as they are shaped by Sammy’s psychological state and internal struggle. This gradational sense of loss can actually be detected at an early stage of the narrative when Sammy recalls himself as an ‘[almost] but not entirely’ free adolescent, driven by the need for ‘personal validity’ into joining the Communist party, and into developing the obsessive desire to possess and sexually exploit Beatrice for his own personal gains (*Fall* 87; Golding in Haffenden 104). As a result, none of Sammy’s episodes is to be dismissed as less significant to highlighting his state of loss, considering how they help contrast his guilty condition with that of an innocent one, as well as reveal a state of being in the making, stripped of a layer of freedom with every choice wilfully made or a decision compulsorily pursued. Sammy may not have had much of a choice in submitting to the dangers of the covert authority of rationality, logic and common sense that came with Nick’s world, or in giving in to the control of Alsopp, his communist group and the false promise of freedom that they held. But he most definitely had a choice in not carrying his affair with Beatrice to a sadistic extent, given how he is shown as having been warned about the ramifications and costs of such extreme decisions by the headmaster of his school. This explains why he suspects the moment he made the decision to pursue Beatrice to be the point that marked his fall, especially since it involves victimizing another individual, compromising her state of autonomy and forcing her into a sadomasochistic relation where neither of them is able to maintain the degree of freedom and independence by which they first walked into the relationship. Reflecting on his sinful past, Sammy maintains sorrowfully that:

¹⁴³ Nick, of course, is not presented as so extreme in his rationalism for he is shown as a highly moral person whose kindness, as Golding had clearly indicated, is not ‘deducible from the system which [he] held to apply’ (Golding in Biles, *Talk* 85). In fact, Golding describes Nick in the novel as the kind of person who ‘had a saintly cobbler as his father and [who] never knew that his own moral life was conditioned by it’ (*Fall* 255). He is, after all, based on Golding’s father who is described by Golding as a ‘profoundly moral man’ despite his belief in a ‘system in which there was no place, logically, for right and wrong’ (85). Golding goes on to add that ‘even Marxism is founded basically on Christian morality’ (85). This shows Golding as holding a view of religion as a powerful support for morality.

[once] a human being has lost freedom there is no end to the coils of cruelty. I must I must I must. They said the damned in hell were forced to torture the innocent live people with disease. But I know now that life is perhaps more terrible than that innocent medieval misconception. We are forced here and now to torture each other. We can watch ourselves becoming automata; feel only terror as our alienated arms left the instruments of their passion towards those we love. Those who lose freedom can watch themselves forced helplessly to do this in daylight until who is torturing who? The obsession drove me at her (*Fall* 128).¹⁴⁴

Such a state of compulsive sinfulness seems to further reinforce Sammy's affinity with Christopher Martin, given how both are represented as sharing the 'obsessive if not pathological' conception of sex and their perception of it as an appetite that 'must' be fulfilled at all costs (131). It is also possible to see the confession as highlighting Sammy's condition of 'automata' as that of a heightened state of self-centredness and single-mindedness, represented first through the development of a similar expression of greed and entitlement to that of Pincher, and traced second to the emergence of what could only be described as shame more so than guilt. Such a conclusion can, in fact, be reinforced by Sammy's reference to the blurred lines between the tortured and the torturer, as well as his early fixation on 'the grey faces that peer over his shoulder,' and which he believes are impossible to 'expunge or exorcise' (3). Consequently, it might be possible to signal the resulting sense of shame, and perhaps to a certain extent guilt, as having contributed not only to sentencing him to a lifetime of regret and self-condemnation, but also to automatizing his abuse against Beatrice instead of keeping him from exploiting her.

Both shame and guilt, of course, are 'self-conscious' self-punishing emotions that are inextricably associated with one's capacity for empathy, and that are, as such, brought about by the same factors, conditions and moral situations. Still, although guilt and shame are highly similar in terms of their dependency on the possession of a moral sense and the understanding that one has violated the norms of moral behaviour, they remain as two distinctively different moral emotions, with guilt being deemed as a more adaptive

¹⁴⁴ This carries some resonance with Fromm's conception of the hollowness of a sadomasochistic reliance. In *Escape from Freedom*, Fromm maintains that the 'sadistic person needs his object just as much as the masochistic needs his. Only instead of seeking security by being swallowed, he gains it by swallowing somebody else. In both cases the integrity of the individual self is lost. In one case I dissolve myself in an outside power; I lose myself. In the other case I enlarge myself by making another being part of myself and thereby I gain the strength I lack as an independent self. It is always the inability to stand the aloneness of one's individual self that leads to the drive to enter into a symbiotic relationship with someone else ... In both cases individuality and freedom are lost' (Ch. 5).

experience than shame.¹⁴⁵ This is possibly the case because guilt is normally expressed in relation to the action rather than the self, thereby allowing individuals to tackle and condemn the behaviour in question without risking a serious damage to their image or self-esteem (Leith and Baumeister; Tangney 8). When it comes to shame, however, there is an intense sense of distress and condemnation which, though it may originate with a particular action, is believed to grow to a point where it mercilessly, and sometimes even destructively, engulfs the self as a whole and renders it incapable of rectifying its wrongs and misdeeds (Leith and Baumeister; Tangney 7). This explains why shame is frequently targeted as a highly painful and frustrating moral emotion that is more likely to turn maladaptive, especially considering the difficulty of resolving a situation where the whole self is held as a problem as opposed to that where the focus is primarily on a particular behaviour or action. There is also the possibility of this fixation on the self resulting in resolving those feelings of distress through antagonizing and degrading the victim rather than seeking amends or some proper means by which the problem can adequately be tackled or resolved (Leith and Baumeister; Tangney 7).

Taken in the context of *Free Fall*, it is possible to explain Sammy's feelings of distress prior to the prison experience as more associated with shame than guilt given Sammy's incapacity at the time to put an end to his abuse or to attempt to rectify the situation through less drastic means. Caught in the bounds of egocentricity, or rather a state of an idolatrous fixation on the self where the focus is more directed at how the poisoned relationship is affecting him rather than Beatrice, Sammy can only address his feelings of shame and guilt by more abuse and degradation. In fact, his prioritizing the resolving of his feelings of distress can be said to have compelled him to direct some of the antagonism and hostility away from himself and towards his victim, instead, in an effort to dull the intensity of the experience and to gain some sense of assurance that he is justified after all in his behaviour. This can most clearly be seen in those particular instances when Sammy antagonizes Beatrice and questions if she is a human or 'a person at all' for not being capable of providing a valid emotional response to his sexual advances, or of adequately addressing his intellectual inquiries in a manner that would quell his sense of alienation (*Fall* 135). Sammy's selfish fixation on resolving his feelings of shame can also be clearly seen in his cowardly avoidance of Beatrice and his disregarding her letters, particularly after meeting Taffy, in the hope that avoiding the problem might help lessen his feelings of distress or at least push them out of focus:

¹⁴⁵ See Leith and Baumeister; Silfver; Baumeister, Stillwell and Heatherton; Tangney 7-9.

I was sorry for her and exasperated by her. I tried to hide this; hoping that time would produce some solution but I was just not callous enough to get away with it. ... Perhaps if I had had the courage then to look her down in the eye I should have seen all the terror and fear that did not get into my pictures of her; but I never met her eye for I was ashamed to. ... I opened the letter and the first lines were a plea for forgiveness; but I read no further because the sight of the first page stabbed me with a knife. ... What else could I have done but run away from Beatrice? (141-5).

Such moments may be interpreted as attempts on Sammy's part to escape responsibility and to direct some of the blame on Beatrice in about the same way that Christopher Martin is seen as blaming God for giving him the mouth by which he has ended up devouring the victims of his past. However, although both experiences are represented as attesting to Christopher's and Sammy's understanding of their actions as serious moral transgressions, it does not appear that Christopher's attempts are motivated by the same feelings of moral distress that take Sammy's sense of self-condemnation to an unbearably excruciating level. Sammy is, of course, shown as having managed for some time to put his abuse in perspective and to deem it as insignificant in the context of war: 'Why bother to murder in private capacity when you can shoot men publicly and be congratulated publicly for it? Why bother about one savaged girl when girls are blown to pieces by the thousand?' (*Fall* 147). In fact, his rationalizations carry strong resonance with those of Christopher who contemplates using the conditions of war to mask his intention of wanting to kill his friend, Nat, and to consequently avoid being held accountable. Despite this initial success, however, Sammy still finds that he is incapable of wholly dismissing the cruelty of his ways, especially after the spiritual and moral awakening that follows the prison experience and that allows him, for the first time in years, to break free from his egocentric fixation on the self and to abandon the distorting system of relativist morality that is responsible for twisting, sometimes even suppressing, his empathic responses. This makes it possible for Sammy to finally understand the consequences of his choices and to seek Beatrice out in an effort to confront the problem, make amends and apologize for the abuse that was unjustly and selfishly inflicted. Unfortunately, however, he discovers that Beatrice is no longer capable of providing forgiveness because she has been rendered catatonic by hereditary factors that may have been aggravated by Sammy's abuse and abandonment. This helps highlight why Sammy's shame-based thinking lingers and why he appears at times to be holding his whole self in a rather negative light, detectable in his describing his life and existence as that of a 'muddy' or 'stagnant pool' as he continues to

narrate his story and reminisce on those particular moments that marked his fall from innocence (6, 125). Still, the fact that the experience has taken a more positive turn, represented in Sammy's capacity to try to make amends, offer forgiveness and locate the one action or choice that has resulted in sentencing him to a lifetime of regret and self-reproach, does, in a sense, show that there is more guilt to Sammy's post-war experience than shame.¹⁴⁶

This should further highlight Sammy's somewhat autobiographical account as a confessional narrative stemming out of an awareness of the moral transgression he has committed, and which is responsible, as such, for the morbid and guilt-ridden condition he finds himself caught in. However, given the elements of trauma in *Free Fall* and the fact that Sammy's struggle to put his traumatic revelation in the Nazi camp across is, to a certain extent, a translation of Golding's own, it might be tempting to regard the confessional account in a different light, and to tackle it as more of a traumatic narrative aimed at dealing with an agitating post-war experience. Golding and Sammy, after all, share the history of having subscribed to a rational worldview which they later come to discover as distortive, selective and insufficient in capturing, explaining and dealing with the atrocities of the war. Both are also gripped by an intense sense of guilt that compels them to ruminate on the negative episodes of their past, and to find themselves succumbing to bouts of self-blame and condemnation. And most importantly, both are post-war artists who, though highly aware of the limitations of language as well as the patterning and distorting effects of art, are still compelled by the intensity of their trauma to create art and to seek a semblance of a pattern that could put their whole experience in perspective. Tackling this line of argument, therefore, may not only highlight the confessional aspects of Sammy's narrative as an attempt at understanding why something as painful as his mental torture at the Nazi camp had to

¹⁴⁶ But not every experience of guilt within the confines of the novel is shown as completely advantageous or prosocial. After all, there is the distressing mix of shame and cultural guilt that can be noted to have existed from the beginning of the novel given the views of Sammy's spiritual parents regarding sex. They can be said to have influenced the adolescent Sammy's perspective just as much as Beatrice's own was shaped by her religious upbringing. Such culturally rooted distress can actually be said to have contributed to the subsequent abuse as mentioned. After all, Sammy's reference to the abuse of Beatrice as having been the 'joint work' of his and Miss Pringle's is not only expressed in relation to how she is the one who began the cycle of torture (284), or how she is the one responsible for driving him away from the moral certainties of the religious realm, but is also associated with how she has contributed, along with Nick, to linking the experience of sex to that of cultural guilt. In fact, although Nick does not subscribe to any religious views, he is shown as holding the belief that 'if the Devil had invented man he couldn't have played him a dirtier, wickedder, a more shameful trick than when he gave him sex!' (261). It is also possible to find a maladaptive expression of guilt in Golding's choice to sentence his protagonist to an eternal experience of moral distress, torture and imprisonment which he associates with the 'grey faces that peer over [Sammy's] shoulder' and that would not leave him alone (3). Sammy's experience of guilt, in other words, is represented as being associated with the experience of being subjected to the full scrutiny of a conscience that rules with a much harsher and crueller authority than any external conditions of restraint or confinement.

happen to him, but also help reveal a cognitive dimension to reality distortions, represented in the unreliability of trauma memories and the instability of past recollections, especially when drawn in a state of guilt. This may be reinforced by the manner in which Sammy's recollection of his interrogation of the simple Beatrice and his memory of being interrogated by Doctor Halde are represented, and which seem to have been made terrifyingly reminiscent of each other, possibly for the purpose of reflecting a punishment that fits the crime, or of perhaps distorting the crime so that it fits the punishment. Like Beatrice who is shown as incapable of answering Sammy's existential and intellectual inquiries with anything but an 'I don't know' or a 'maybe' (132), Sammy eventually finds himself recalling a time and a situation where he could do nothing but rely on the same responses to address the mentally taxing inquiries of his interrogator and torturer. Sammy's experience with the Gestapo officer, in other words, can be interpreted in two ways. It can be tackled as a distorted and unreliable episode that was made to appear as such due to Sammy's understanding of the extent and depth of his sins against Beatrice. A different way would be to regard the experience as having influenced and shaped Sammy's recollections of his sins in a manner that makes him seem deserving of being mentally tortured. Either way, the moral dimension to the novel will not be lost because both readings reflect an expression of guilt that is provoked by the growing knowledge of the extent of the cruelty that Sammy, and by association humanity, are capable of. They both help reinforce the association between morality, the inevitability of guilt and mankind's inherent brutality. Both readings can also be considered as fostering a sense of uncertainty regarding the validity of representation and the possibility of ever attaining truth. In fact, such a notion can clearly be detected at an earlier point of Sammy's narrative through Golding's reliance on the elements of metafictionality. It can also be said to have been later reinforced through Sammy's post-war realization that Beatrice might have been justified, after all, in her indefinite responses: 'For maybe was sign of all our times. We were certain of nothing' (120).

Concerns with the problems of truth and representation might have begun with the modernist self-consciousness of Golding's earlier fables, particularly in the illusory world of *Pincher Martin*, where doubts regarding the truth status of our conscious perception of our world are given a much clearer manifestation than in *Lord of the Flies* or *The Inheritors*. It is with *Free Fall*, however, that Golding abandons the strict conditions of the fable and opts, instead, for the kind of techniques and structure that eventually allow for a fuller engagement with such notions as a way of asserting the complexity of both the human experience and art.

CONCLUSION

The Later Golding: A Universal Pessimist and a Cosmic Optimist

We need more humanity, more care, more love. There are those who expect a political system to produce that; and others who expect the love to produce the system. My own faith is that the truth of the future lies between the two and we shall behave humanly and a bit humanely, stumbling along, haphazardly generous and gallant, foolishly and meanly wise, until the rape of our planet is seen to be the preposterous folly that it is.

William Golding, 'Nobel Lecture 1983'.¹⁴⁷

So much has been written and published about Golding with little attention to how the author's scientific or rather evolutionary knowledge had factored into the creation of his novels. In fact, it is possible to see the scholarly efforts dedicated to understanding Golding's works as roughly belonging to either the realm of traditional, theological or general criticism, or to an interdisciplinarity, which though acknowledging the existential, still downplays the biological, evolutionary or rational in keeping with the religious overtones that pervade the majority of his works. This is, of course, understandable given the author's hostility to the rationality of the sciences and the fact that two of his major works, namely *Lord of the Flies* and *The Inheritors*, were written as a response to a reductive pattern of progress promoted by the scientific ethos of the Victorian age. As shown throughout my analysis, however, relying on an approach that takes account of the cognitive, the biocultural and the existential does not necessarily entail undermining the dominant theological or biblical notions of the fall and original sin that are normally relied on by the author in describing the reality of the human condition. On the contrary, such a perspective can be seen as having proved helpful in lending credence to Golding's claims of the universality of the problem of evil, especially considering how it reinforces the association that Golding had first drawn between egotism

¹⁴⁷ In *A Moving Target*, 213.

and biology within the context of *The Inheritors*, or how it highlights the inescapable eventuality of the problem in both a developmental and an evolutionary sense. The approach can also be seen as having proved helpful in showing Golding's early works as providing a rich source for thinking about some of the issues that cognitive science, and to a certain extent, existential psychology deal with, particularly when it comes to matters of empathy, memory and moral judgements or the existentially gripping problems of identity, ideology, religion and death. Moreover, examining Golding's early works in such a frame can help in maintaining a sense of the relevance of his creations, especially considering how it involves taking the ethical arguments in his work beyond the typical realm of traditional or general criticism, investigating them in light of current rational, psychological and philosophical conceptions of human nature, and understanding their development in relation to those that were occupying the intellectual and scientific spheres of his time. But can such an approach continue to prove helpful when taken beyond the realm of Golding's early concern with the universal reality of evil to his much more complex and gradual endorsement of postmodernism, its vehement disavowal of objective reality and its intense and insistent denial of the truth status of both art and grand narratives? One way of addressing this question is to develop an understanding of how Golding continues to pursue his modernist preoccupation with the problems of patterning, solipsism and reality distortions in a postmodernist frame in his later engagements before linking such conceptions with a cognitive understanding of the mind that acknowledges its role in constructing and distorting the world we live in. But before such a task is undertaken, it is useful first to target the emergence of postmodernism in the post-war years in light of trauma theory and to link its narrative techniques and art to the trauma of the age and the shattering revelations of the Holocaust.

Examining Golding's later novels in comparison to his early fables may initially show him progressing from a post-war fixation on the darkness of man's heart to a much more inclusive engagement with the totality of man and his flashes of religious experience. This does not mean, however, that such interests were never an integral part of his past fables as is evident in the religious awareness of his characters which can be said to have been given its earliest manifestation in Simon's confrontation with the pig's head in *Lord of the Flies*. It also should not be taken to mean that Golding's interest in exploring the fallen nature of humanity had ceased or diminished in the later novels simply because there is a marked absence of the earlier moral certainties by which the darkness of a man's heart was to be judged. Golding's engagement with the fallen nature of man remains a necessary part of his

growing awareness of the paradoxical reality of life. Despite the persistence of such engagements, however, which can be said to have bound Golding's works together just as much as his interest in the numinous, it does not appear that they are invested with the same hopelessness and pessimism as before. The tone by which such matters are handled, for one thing, appears to have become much lighter and less serious as Golding's creations continued to progress towards a more inclusive and less tragic dimension. Humour had also become more of a recurring element in the later fictions, particularly in *Rites of Passage*, which for all its serious implications was meant, as Golding had clearly noted, to be read as a black comedy, a funny and entertaining treatment of the inherent flaws of man that haunt his adopted systems and infect his social relations (Baker, 'Interview'). Even works such as *Darkness Visible*, which presented a ferocious attack on contemporary society that echoes the seriousness of the earlier fables, have been invested with the kind of humorous moments that sometimes help in undermining the pessimism of their premise and in promoting more of a hopeful outlook regarding the fate of humankind.

When asked about his later creations and why they became less focused on all the beastly potentialities of man, Golding maintained that he had begun writing fiction at a point when the war experience and the destruction of his liberal or rather naive Rousseauesque view of humanity were still fresh in his mind (in Haffenden 112-3; Biles 50). He explains in 'Fable' that he went into the war with a belief in 'the perfectibility of social man; that a correct structure of society would produce goodwill, and that therefore you can remove all social ills by the reorganization of society' (*Gates* 78-80). But then he came to discover the strain of malignancy in the human race and became gripped ever after with an utter sense of pessimism and hopelessness that then found its fullest expression in his earliest fables (*Gates* 78-80; Golding in Haffenden 113; Biles 50). The objective purpose driving the creation of those books was, as stated earlier, the need to highlight the state of self-deception masking man's innate sinfulness from himself, but Golding maintains that there is also a personal dimension, represented in the act of writing as offering some means of helping, healing, or perhaps even forgiving oneself (in Haffenden 115). He admits to Haffenden that there was no guarantee that he would not have become a member of the Nazi party had he perhaps been in Germany at the time, and that the writing of *Lord of the Flies*, in particular, might have partially come about as a result of an attempt at 'purging [himself] of that knowledge' (115). This helps highlight Golding's early fables as having possibly been a way of dealing with his own war trauma, not through a direct representation of it, which given the limitation of language and the patterning effects of art may be highly difficult if not impossible to execute,

but through creating a construct that could at least communicate the feelings and realizations associated with the experience of war. Hence the ‘sheer grief’ by which the subject matter was handled, the emotionally laden ‘theme [that] defeats structuralism,’ and the tragic and mournful tone that laments ‘the lost childhood of the world’ (Golding, *Target* 163). In a *Moving Target* article, Golding maintains:

The Second World War came near to demolishing all the assumptions of the first one and uncovered entirely different areas of indescribability. The horror of the brewed up tank, the burning plane, the crushed and sinking submarine—all that is difficult to describe but the job can be done. The experience of Hamburg, Belsen, Hiroshima, and Dachau cannot be imagined. We have gone to war and beggared description all over again. Those experiences are like black holes in space. Nothing can get out to let us know what it was like inside. It was like what it was like and on the other hand it was like nothing whatsoever. We stand before a gap in history. We have invented a limit to literature (102).

This struggle with the problem of indescribability in recounting a traumatic experience is not specific to Golding, of course. It is a common concern shared in most trauma accounts by traumatized individuals who, though they may wish to draw on the self-healing aspects of narratives and writing, are usually seen as struggling with the incomprehensibility, elusiveness and disorderly quality of the traumatic event, and the difficulty of addressing its full complexity without distorting it (Brockmeier 28).¹⁴⁸ The problem can also be detected in post-war fictional creations, including those of Golding and particularly *Free Fall*, where Sammy Mountjoy is shown as attempting to put his whole life in perspective in the aftermath of his experience in the Nazi camp, only to find himself burdened by the utter difficulty of expressing the indescribable, or of at least communicating ‘in part’ what the sheer enormity of the situation might have entailed (5). As a result, it is common to see both fictional and nonfictional traumatic accounts as violating the norms of conventional narratives, or reflecting the utilization of techniques such as ‘blackouts’ or ‘fuzzy temporalities’ for the

¹⁴⁸ Ruth Leys seems to trace this indescribability problem to how memory works or rather to the possibility of the traumatic experience never ending up being processed properly and never getting stored in memory, as such, given, of course, the shocking effect of the event (8). Others such as LaCapra believe the experience to be laid down at a much more basic level, allowing it to re-emerge in ‘nightmares, flashbacks, anxiety attacks, and other forms of intrusively repetitive behavior’ (89). Such accounts help link the difficulty that Golding is reporting in attempting to describe his war experience to how memory works, a point that should make reading *Free Fall*, in particular, in light of trauma theory and memory research particularly interesting, considering how it is centred on the recollection of a war survivor who has so much in common with Golding.

purpose of conveying the intensity of trauma and mimicking its effects and shattering outcomes (qtd. in Brockmeier 28-9). In fact, it is possible to see the abandonment of the highly organized structure of the fabular mode and the disruption of the chronological order in *Free Fall* as delivering something of the same effect. They help reflect Sammy's struggle to impose a semblance of meaning on life in the aftermath of the war, as well as suggest an association between the disorderly aspect of the narrative and the chaotic and irreducible elements of both life and the traumatic experience. The effects of trauma can also be said to have been already delivered in Golding's highly structured or fabular novels since they do not offer a resolution or a solution to our fall, but are rather more oriented towards denying the reader a sense of closure in the conventional sense. This is, of course, typical of most fictional and nonfictional accounts of trauma because 'presenting the experience as complete and completed,' or providing the kind of ending where conflicts are resolved and justice is finally attained, would simply entail 'betray[ing] what happened' (Frank, 122).

Denying the characters a sense of resolution to their dilemmas is an aspect that Golding chose to maintain in the later novels because he believed that providing closure in the conventional sense might, in some way, suggest the provision of a solution or some sort of knowledge of how to work towards the goal of perfecting man (in Haffenden, 112). This should not mean, however, that Golding was still incapable of abandoning his previous stance in *Lord of the Flies* and of reverting back in the opposite direction where there was hope for man's redemption after all, especially after he had 'moved further away from Belsen and Hiroshima and all the rest of it' (Golding in Biles, 50-51). The prospect of social perfectibility, in other words, had not only become something that Golding could conceive of 'intellectually,' albeit still not 'emotionally,' but had also made it possible for him to reject his view of man as a 'morally diseased creation' (in Haffenden, 110; Baker, 'Interview'). It helped him further his interest in the social setting, in figuring out how to make society work and in understanding how to live in society without exploiting other people (in Haffenden, 119). Such questions had, of course, begun with *Lord of the Flies* whose political and social dimension cannot be denied. Still, given that Golding's interest at the time was mainly directed at highlighting the folly of examining social systems for the roots of evil, it became necessary for him to cast his characters in conditions of isolation, away from the civilizing force of modern society, where it was impossible for man to hide 'behind a...pair of political pants' (Golding, *Gates* 78). This aided in casting society as something of a benign factor that helps to bring out the good in people and in channeling their evil in a positive direction. The notion can even be further reinforced by Golding's representation of Jack as a relatively good

boy prior to being cast away on the island, considering how he is shown as having managed in the presence of an 'off-white' social scheme to become head of a boys' choir (Golding in Biles 46-8). If there is a dark dimension to society in the early books, it is perhaps attributable to the fact that Golding intended his early fables to trace the flaws of society to the flaws of the individual. Golding might have also wanted to subtly highlight the notion that it is the creation or emergence of society itself that testifies to the innate sinfulness of man because it reflects a dormant awareness of the necessity for restraining people's nature and for limiting their expression of freedom. Such notions remain, of course, in the subsequent novels, particularly in *The Pyramid* (1967), where the loveless society of Stilbourne is meant to reflect its inhabitants' incapacity to love or to view others as anything but a means to an end. What changes in the later engagements, however, is that Golding comes to place more emphasis on the notion that it is possible for the organization of society, sometimes, to affect its individuals and to direct them towards a more destructive path.

Introducing the social context as providing a scheme that can restrict people's freedom for better or for worse may, in a sense, be an acknowledgement by Golding that there are now factors beyond the individual's control that might sometimes overpower the innate goodness of man just as much as they are capable of suppressing his instinctual evil.¹⁴⁹ Consequently, it is difficult to pass moral judgements with the same certainty as before, particularly in those moments when the social circumstances are represented by Golding as something that would have allowed the characters to act or turn out differently had they perhaps been extinguished or made less constricting.¹⁵⁰ This shift from the moral certainties of the early fables to the difficulty of passing moral judgements is further reinforced by Golding's growing interest in

¹⁴⁹ In responding to readers and commentators who detected an increasing level of optimism in the later novels, Golding maintained that the optimism in the sea trilogy, in particular, might have been inescapable to some extent because all three volumes are supposed to be the work of Edmund Talbot, 'an intelligent but brash and optimistic young man' who has every reason to convey such optimism in his writing given the triumph of Britain in the Napoleonic wars and the subsequent promise of Britain ruling the world for another century or more (*Ends* 7-8). Golding warned, however, that such a proclamation should not be taken to validate the charges of pessimism that were directed against him because it was ultimately his 'own optimism which gained the upper hand' and made both him and Talbot 'less and less inclined to portray life as a hopeless affair in the face of...tragic circumstances' (7-8).

¹⁵⁰ This clearly shows in *Free Fall*, of course. Another good example is *Darkness Visible* where Golding highlights the difficulty of passing moral judgements by forcing the reader to reevaluate the crimes, sins and intentions of his three principal characters Matty, Sophie and Mr. Pedigree. Golding engages with this matter repeatedly throughout the course of the novel. It is through Mr. Pedigree, however, that Golding clearly brings this issue to the fore, especially given how Pedigree's remorse and cry for help is drawn in stark opposition to Sophie's psychopathic indifference to her sins: 'There've been such people in this neighbourhood, such monsters, that girl and her men, Stanhope, Goodchild, Bell even, and his ghastly wife—I'm not like them, bad but not as bad, I never hurt anybody—they thought I hurt children but I didn't, I hurt myself. And you know about the last thing the thing I shall be scared into doing if I live long enough—just to keep a child quiet, keep it from telling—that's hell Matty, that'll be hell—help me!' (283).

the indeterminacy inherent in mysticism, art and language, an interest which may in itself be considered as attesting to Golding's growing optimism, considering how it marks a diminishing engagement with the war and its traumatic revelations. It should be noted, however, that given how such concerns are not only related to matters of representation, but also shared by a post-war generation that found itself gripped by the difficulty of communicating the traumatic atrocities of the Holocaust, it might be sensible to regard them as still betraying a traumatic dimension, albeit not in the same intensity as before.¹⁵¹

Golding's concern with the difficulty of representation in the aftermath of the war had always been an integral part of his late modernist exploration and his experimentation with different fictional modes by which he could convey the limitations of the conventional forms of fiction in communicating the horrifying revelations of the war. It can clearly be seen in the self-consciousness of his early novels, for example, employed for the purpose of exploring the relationship between fiction, truth and reality, of stressing the notion of self-deception and reality distortion, and of highlighting the state of uncertainty and the loss of meaning associated with the subsequent breakdown of belief systems.¹⁵² What happens in the later novels, however, is that a less intense preoccupation with some of these effects continues, but with increasing reliance on the metafictional mode as direct engagements with the war diminish,¹⁵³ changes which again make it possible to detect something of a decreasing pessimism on Golding's part.¹⁵⁴ Still, although Golding is noted as having relied on the metafictional mode to 'playfully' explore issues relating to the claimed "'truth" status' of both art and history, represented in *The Paper Men* and the sea trilogy respectively (Crawford 16), it seems that the mode does, in the end, promote an air of indeterminacy typical of postmodern fiction whose techniques are noted by Anne Whitehead as 'overlapping' with

¹⁵¹ This can most clearly be detected in the manner by which Golding has his characters express their struggle with language and the patterning effects of art in their attempt to communicate their vision of the mystical and in their fear of imparting an air of normality to an otherwise unique vision or experience. Matty, for example, prefers silence to speech partly because he was brought to do so, and partly because he cannot say what he means (*Darkness* 96-7); Sammy can only hope to communicate 'in part' because the quality of his terror in the Nazi camp cannot be recreated, much less shared (*Fall* 5); Barclay feels that he has 'nothing to speak with but...metaphor' in addressing his spiritual experience because 'words are too weak' (*Paper* 132-3, 52); and Jocelin feels that he needs 'three tongues to say three things at once' as he struggles to come to terms with the complexity of the motivations driving his vision (*Spire* 214, 218).

¹⁵² The mode is highlighted through Christopher Martin's construction of an artificial world from the resources of his own mind and consciousness, the children's innocent belief that the boy's life on the island will be analogous to another naive fictional adventure: 'It's like in a book...Treasure Island ... Swallows and Amazons ... Coral Island' (45), and Sammy Mountjoy's struggle against the distorting patterns of art and form in search of a meaningful narrative.

¹⁵³ They are writings, in other words, that 'implicitly' reflect the effects of Golding's war experience even though the war is rarely mentioned.

¹⁵⁴ *Darkness Visible* is an exception, of course. This may be attributed to the fact that Golding began writing the novel in 1955 (Carey, *Golding* 367), around the same time he wrote his early fables.

those usually employed in traumatic narratives (3). Self-consciousness is, of course, an intrinsic aspect of the process of fictional creation and can be said to have existed in less noticeable forms long before it came to prominence in modernist and postmodernist productions (Waugh 5). Still, its emergence in the form of metafictional narratives in an age that 'has been singularly uncertain, insecure, self-questioning and culturally pluralistic' is of particular interest because it fosters the notion of a fictitious reality which, in turn, functions 'to foreground the difficulty of representing trauma and the resulting aporias' (Waugh 6-7; Gibbs 81).

For trauma theorists such as Dominick LaCapra and Patrick Bracken, conceptions of uncertainty or indeterminacy that are normally associated with postmodernism can be one of the major aspects that help tie in the writings of the age with reported accounts of trauma survivors. Both, after all, involve the disintegration of a belief system or a frame of reference that used to provide life with meaning prior to the traumatic event.¹⁵⁵ This disintegrated frame of reference for the postmodernists is located in the Enlightenment and its conception of science, rationality and reason as holding the hope of improving human societies, of putting an end to all problems and of fostering an increased sense of 'sensitivity' to any kind of 'suffering and injustice' that may arise (LaCapra 176-7). One possible reason why the Enlightenment eventually came to be perceived as irredeemably irreconcilable with the trauma of the age, aside from its failure in keeping a tragedy of the scale and enormity of the Holocaust from happening, is the indirect role it played in promoting the supposedly scientific ideology that eventually resulted in the extermination of those perceived as racially inferior. In fact, LaCapra notes, that it is because of the Enlightenment's conception of western civilization as representing the highest point of progress ever attained that it became difficult for people to make sense of the atrocities of the Second World War or to even 'come to terms with the Holocaust within that frame of reference' (176). As a result, it is common to see postmodernist texts as relying on the mode of the fantastic or the magic realist as a way of challenging or questioning the very same discourse of rationality, logic and reason that held the false hope of progress or that contributed to the escalations of war in the first place. Fantastical elements can also be said to be a commentary on the novelty of the traumatic experience, how it defies ordinary modes of expression and how despite the air of unreality

¹⁵⁵ The destruction of belief systems in the wake of trauma is noted by Janoff-Bulman and Yopyk as a common psychological response (125), an observation that further reinforces the association between accounts of trauma and postmodernism and its distrust of grand narratives. For Bracken, however, reports of a loss of meaning in the aftermath of the trauma of the Second World War are culturally specific and cannot be handled as a common universal response to traumatic events in general.

that surrounds its occurrence, it is still undeniably and inarguably real (Kerman, Adam 12).

For Golding, reliance on the fantastic and the magic realist might have begun as a way of challenging the established rationalist discourse of the western world and of promoting an awareness of the metaphysical dimension of existence that is typically suppressed by the supremacy of such rational systems. In fact, it is the perception of the numinous itself that is regarded by Golding as an outcome of the traumatizing experience of the war and the destruction of the pattern of social perfectibility and Wellsian rationality that had earlier blinded him to the miraculous and irrational elements of one's existence, and robbed him of his privileged access to the spiritual realm as a child. However, although most of Golding's novels display elements of the fantastic in one way or another, there seems to be a marked difference in the manner by which Golding chose to handle the mystical and the spiritual in his later creations, both in terms of technique and intensity. This is especially evident in the narrative mode which seems to aid in marking a pattern of gradual conversion from clarity to obscurity. Examining *Lord of the Flies*, for example, shows Golding as struggling against the restrictive form of the fable and its conditions of clarity, economy and precision in communicating his vision of the mystical. In fact, the difficulty can be detected in his portrayal of Simon, in particular, which although 'toned down' in accordance with Monteith's advice to make Simon 'explicable in purely rational terms' (154-5), is still noted by some critics such as Bernard Dick as marking an unfortunate flaw in the intricate design of a highly acclaimed masterpiece (25). This changes in the later novels, however, especially in *Darkness Visible*, given Golding's clear reticence regarding the humanity, existence and moral status of his protagonist, Matty. It also shows clearly in Golding's refusal to provide readers with any conclusive hint within the confines of the novel as to whether his protagonist is supposed to be read as a spiritual prophet, a religious fanatic or even an attribute of the numinous itself. Relying on a reticent narrator, after all, is one way by which Golding disrupts the balance between direct communication and discovery in favour of obscurity, or what LaCapra might describe as a 'dosage of the illness itself' (154). It aids in countering the difficulty of representation and the limitations of the conventional forms of fictional creation in capturing both the richness of our world and the depth and intensity of the traumatic revelations of the war. Reliance on a reticent narrator is also a means by which Golding realizes the desire to make readers understand their own limitations, the reductiveness of ultimate explanations and the defectiveness of rational modes of thinking. The device does, after all, involve allying the reader with a limited character who is caught in a state of self-deception and who is, as such, oblivious to certain crucial aspects of both life and reality (Redpath 29-30). This is

accomplished in *The Spire*, for example, through bringing readers to share Jocelin's initial confusion regarding the authenticity of his vision and the reality of his motive for building the spire, a matter that continues to torment and deny him from seeing the beauty of his creation up to the last moment of his life. It can also be said to have been delivered in the sea trilogy, first through Talbot's adoption of an Augustan view of life that denies the mystical; and later through his succumbing to an episode of madness that further compromises the reality of his vision and that highlights, as such, the inevitability of distortions in both our conscious experience of the world and our fiction.

Golding's reliance on the distorted point of view of a limited character can, of course, be detected in his early fables as in the case of Christopher Martin who continues to deny the reality of his death; or the Neanderthal Lok who lacks the advanced cognition and the linguistic faculties of his intellectual superiors. However, what marks Golding's early engagements as different in that particular regard is the manner by which he handled the technique, evident in his insistence on delivering his basic premise as clearly and emphatically as possible through the dramatic shift in perspective. This had to change in the later novels, of course, particularly since the scope began to grow and incorporate much more complex aspects of human existence that even Golding felt he had no full grasp of, but which he believed he had to express nonetheless.

Such techniques and concerns may have grown out of the preoccupations of earlier modernist writers' sense of uncertainty and modernism's innovative literary productions and modes of expression. However, given the extent to which these techniques were utilized and explored in the later stage of Golding's literary career, it seems plausible to regard them as gradually becoming affiliated with the postmodernist trend whose productions are noted by trauma theorists as having something in common with traumatic narratives (A. Whitehead 3). Postmodernist productions are even regarded sometimes as holding the possibility of being read as 'post-Holocaust' creations, 'struggling to come to terms with the trauma that called them into existence' (LaCapra 179). This turn to postmodernism, according to McCarron, is noted as having begun for Golding with *Darkness Visible* (*Coincidence* 9). The statement is further supported by Paul Crawford who believes the novel to reflect Golding's antagonism to the trend towards postmodernism since he relies on its techniques 'to run his novel into the ground, [and] construct a failing work' as a way of highlighting the challenges he faces as an artist 'in an age that so radically calls into question the significance of fiction and its truth-telling powers' (170). Such antagonism, however, seems to have gradually dimmed in the subsequent novels, particularly in the sea trilogy, where Golding is seen as fully endorsing

common postmodern techniques for the purpose of deepening his exploration of the patterning tendencies of art and the difficulty, if not impossibility, of avoiding its distorting effects on the experience that art is supposed to capture. The antagonism may even be considered to have noticeably diminished already in *The Paper Men*, which though it carries an attack on postmodernism and postmodernity, as *Darkness Visible* does, still exhibits a certain degree of advocacy of some of its notions, particularly those relating to the author's authority and control over his creations (McCarron, *Golding* 49; Crawford 172). Golding being a moralist, of course, addresses these notions in a spiritual and moral frame by rejecting the possibility of art as ever offering an alternative to spirituality in the post-war age, and by challenging any consideration of the artist as a moral example (McCarron, *Golding* 49).¹⁵⁶ There is, however, another dimension to Golding's engagement in the matter which manifests itself in the paradoxical answer that Golding provides within the confines of the novel in response to the question of whether the author does possess a privileged understanding of his creation, more so than the critic or the reader.

When asked about the Lawrentian dictum 'Never trust the teller, trust the tale,' and whether he agrees with the general opinion that writers might, after all, know less about their work than what they actually think, Golding strictly maintained that he believed the dictum to be 'absolute nonsense' because writing for him was all about authors controlling their creation in the same manner as a painter who 'can entirely visualize a painting, and then just paint what he's visualizing' (Kermode, 'Meaning' 9-10). He states to Kermode that:

the man who tells the tale if he has a tale worth telling will know exactly what he is about and this business of the artist as a sort of starry-eyed inspired creature, dancing along, with his feet two or three feet above the surface of the earth, not really knowing what sort of prints he's leaving behind him, is nothing like the truth (9-10).

Years later, however, Golding came gradually to abandon such a view, not only in encouraging readers to think first about what they believe the book is about, but also in denying the author, or rather himself, any sort of knowledge, or god-like status over his creations (54, 56). He is even reported as having stated to Baker that the reason why his books are deemed so obscure is that he is not particularly clear about what he is trying to say,

¹⁵⁶ In fact, Golding is reported by Grove as having rejected the common tendency to forgive artists their mistakes just because they are artists: 'We can forgive anybody provided they've got a bit of genius -- which is absolute fatuity, of course...I mean, when Beethoven promised one overture to two different publishers, he was a con man. He may have been a genius but he was also a moral slob'.

and that the best thing he could do is ‘translate obscurity into—modified—obscurity’ (qtd. in Redpath 36). Carey also notes Golding as having made a similar statement to Monteith regarding *Darkness Visible*, probably the most complex and obscure of his creations, which he believes could help explain why it is the one novel that Golding refused to talk about, and why it had gone through ‘the longest incubation period of any of his books’ (Golding 367, 378). However although obscurity in Golding’s later creations seems to have come about as a necessary condition to handling and highlighting a subject matter so abstruse, there appears to be an additional purpose to Golding’s desire to maintain it, especially in *The Spire*, which resists hermeneutic reduction to one particular pattern or reading. In discussing the different explanations that were put forth regarding Jocelin’s motivation, Golding maintained:

what the hell does it matter what the writer thought of his the book? The book is on its own. But I am well aware of all those choices you mention. Whether the character is a psychopath or a dedicated mystic who is chosen – like Ezekiel, if you like – to construct a spire which will stand as a sign to the faithful ... The writer is aware of that whole spectrum, but he doesn’t choose between them. What does the right choice matter, so long as the spectrum is there? (Haffenden 109).¹⁵⁷

As previously stated, such a step is vital for Golding not only for the sake of ‘leaving his options open’ as a writer, but also for providing a much more accurate depiction of ‘what life is like’ (109), that is reflecting the mystery and irreducible complexity of man and the art he produces to the best of his abilities (115). In this light, Jocelin’s final cry ‘It’s like the apple tree!’ is not merely a testament to the elusiveness of his near-death revelation regarding the spire and the difficulty of putting it into words. It is a support for the intricacy of human motivation, the tangled relations between cause and effect, and the resulting difficulty of providing a reading that can ‘encompass’ all the possible reasons, impulses and truths that a statement as seemingly simple as this may suggest (*Spire* 223; See Redpath 35; Clements 98-9). A similar effect can also be detected in *Darkness Visible* whose structure is reported by Carey as having been intentionally designed to deny readers any grasp on certainty, and to invite them into contemplating different possible interpretations for what the book may be

¹⁵⁷ Golding’s views regarding the author’s authority or control were mixed, particularly in *The Paper Men*. There are moments, as explained in the introduction, when Golding seems to be arguing against the Barthesian death of the author. There are also moments in the novel, as already shown, when Golding appears to be celebrating the author’s death. Judy Carver, daughter of William Golding, notes that although her father had intellectually come to accept the notion that the writer has little control over his books once they are published and that readers are entitled to their own reading, he did not totally come to terms with it emotionally. He still found misinterpretations frustrating because he really wanted readers to see what he meant.

about (*Golding* 367). It can even be said to be operating under the cloak of simplicity in a book as direct and straightforward as *The Pyramid* given what Redpath believes to be a ‘gap between the text and the title’ that seems to have invited many different readings and interpretations over the years (31). Further support for the conclusion can be found in the fact that Golding had actually thought of including the subtitle ‘As you like it’ along with *The Pyramid*, in an attempt to draw readers’ attention to the fact that the book may, after all, be much more complicated than how it seems on the surface (Tiger 214). In an interview with Haffenden, Golding states:

I would be very happy to meet someone who could tell me one single, incontestable truth. I’ve never found one ... The twentieth century is the ambiguous century and I’m a child of my century. I don’t feel any enormous, ultimate certainties, except perhaps these tenuous ones I’ve been talking about – this cosmic view, the multiple universe I guessed at. I think I’m right to present my books in this ambiguous way, because any given universe is partial (113).

This might once again suggest that Golding might have partially been motivated to create his later novels in a manner that allows for numerous simultaneous readings in order to reject the reductive tendencies of ultimate explanations or interpretations, and to highlight the insufficiency of forcing a pattern on an irreducible reality. Carrying a cognitive, evolutionary, or an existential reading, as such, may prove problematic, especially given Golding’s antagonism to scientific rationalism, its tendency to rely on a ‘language with the grey precision of an electronic computer,’ and its incapacity to deal with the kind of questions that can be ‘answered only by the methods of philosophy and the arts’ (*Golding, Gates* 121). It should be noted, however, that Golding’s position regarding science was as mixed as his stand regarding the author’s control or authority. Though he repeatedly expressed dissatisfaction with the reductionism of science and the scientists’ tendency to apply it everywhere (*Golding in Haffenden* 114; Baker, ‘Interview’), he still maintained some sense of ‘appreciation,’ perhaps even respect, ‘for what it could accomplish’ (Dick 62). It might even be possible to conclude, given Golding’s clear affirmation of a desire to get back in touch with the scientific scene rather than the literary one (in Baker, *Study* 94), that he might still have held too much respect for science to dismiss it entirely or to regard it through the same lens of skepticism as the postmodernists’. It also appears from his Nobel prize lecture that he was still concerned with bridging the gap between the two cultures, or more precisely the miraculous and the scientific, rather than dismissing the scientific realm altogether, an

endeavour which he admits having pursued in *Free Fall*, only to end up making ‘a mess of it’ (*Target* 204).

Golding’s writings may have taken a postmodernist turn at a later point in his career, particularly in relation to the truth status of representations, reality distortions and the patterning effects of both art and language. Such notions and beliefs, however, are not exactly irreconcilable with what have been uncovered in the sciences, or more specifically in the field of cognitive psychology. Both postmodernists and cognitive scientists, after all, are skeptical of the representational capacities of our narratives and constructs and regard them as poor reflections of the external reality that we occupy. But whereas postmodernists trace this particular problem to language which they regard as ‘imprecise, self-referential and subject to individual gaps between the signifier and the signified’ (Austin 38), cognitive scientists tend to locate the problem in our conscious perception which they perceive as fragmented, impoverished, biased and undeniably selective (Austin, 38; Metzinger, Intro.; Blackmore 17-24; Dennett 366).

When describing the subjective phenomenon of human consciousness, Thomas Metzinger explains that one of the common misconceptions we draw from the genuine, unified and coherent awareness of being situated in a world here and now is that we are actually in direct contact with reality (Ch.2). The truth of the matter, however, is that we are ‘born naive realists’ who are incapable of detecting that our vivid and conscious experience of our surroundings is merely a product of neural and cognitive processes compensating for an otherwise fragmented, maybe even impoverished, perception of the world (Metzinger Ch.1; Blackmore 17-24; Dennett 366). Our senses, after all, are ‘limited’ and ‘selective’ (Metzinger Intro.). Since they are more oriented to processing the world for purposes of survival rather than depicting it the way it actually is, they are likely to result in ‘a low-dimensional projection of the inconceivably richer physical reality surrounding and sustaining us’ (Metzinger Intro.; Austin 133-4). This means that ‘what we see and hear, or what we feel and smell and taste, is only a small fraction of what actually exists out there’ (Metzinger Intro.). Consequently, it would be more fitting to label the experience that is consciousness as ‘not so much an image of reality’ as ‘a tunnel through reality’ (Intro.).

Such findings are, of course, not established with the utmost certainty or even corroborated in a less controversial frame than the one provided by the fields of Consciousness Studies and Philosophy of Mind. Still, to highlight the basic possession of consciousness as the kind of asset that involves creating a model of the world rather than depicting it accurately, is to expose the reality distortion problem, if one could describe it as

such, at a much deeper and fundamental level than imagined. Contrary to common belief, accuracy is not always the privileged criterion that grants individuals the adaptive edge when dealing with their surroundings, not only because there is a limitation inherent in the amount of information the brain can store and process, but also because the absence of functional selectivity is likely to overwhelm the brain with data and subject it to information anxiety (Austin 71). This explains why certain cognitive processes such as compression and schematization are particularly important as methods by which the brain can tackle the limitation problem, especially when it comes to the amount of information it can store and use (30-1). However, one resulting side effect of the development of such processes is that the content of the brain's mental storage is likely to be for the most part undetectably unstable (31-3). Certain amassed details or experiences are likely to be modified, distorted, reshaped, or deleted because 'the value of compressing information outweighs the value of getting all of the information right' (33). The same principle can also be said to apply in a psychological sense, considering how it may sometimes serve people to have certain aspects of their recollected experiences modified in a manner that would either promote an adaptive state of self-deception, or enhance a positive image of the self (Trivers Ch. 7; McAllister et al.) After all, there is little truth in the notion that the more people are attuned to reality, the healthier they are (Austin 121), and since people have always been found to be in possession of the kind of positive illusions that would allow them to overcome difficulties and cope with their surroundings, it should come as no surprise to say that such self-biased distortions do serve a highly adaptive function (Austin 120; McAllister et al.). Unfortunately, however, the instability of the processes of mental storage does not always work in the individual's favour. Certain psychological factors such as guilt or trauma are also capable of jeopardizing the authenticity of remembered events, leading individuals, in some cases, to magnify the negative aspects of their experience rather than suppress or alter them in a manner that could ease their distress (McAllister et al.; Laney and Takarangi). It is also possible for these tendencies to interfere, and not in a positive way, with people's perception of themselves or their sense of identity, especially since identity is, in the end, a 'life story,' a construct that is largely dependent on people's 'reinterpretation' or 'reconstruction' of their memories, and how they choose to tie in the defining moments of their past with their present (Morin; McAdams 195-6; McAllister et al.).

Such a line of argument may be particularly tempting to explore in relation to *Free Fall*, and by extension *Pincher Martin*, given that both Sammy's overwhelming sense of guilt and Christopher's single-minded desire to survive are shown as controlling factors that govern the

selection, and possibly the reconstruction, of the kind of experiences they find themselves forced to relive and remember. What should be highlighted for now, however, is that both postmodernists and cognitive scientists seem to share the belief that narratives and representations should not be evaluated in terms of accuracy, but rather in terms of usefulness, or to use a term more Darwinian, adaptiveness (Austin 39). However, contrary to postmodernists, cognitivists do not hold the extreme position that our narratives and representations are ‘always paradoxical’ and ‘misleading’ (Spolsky). Taking a rather evolutionary view, they maintain that ‘relatively reliable’ data are necessary for our species to function; so while they do agree with postmodernists in that they are not perfect, they believe them to be ‘reliable enough’ for the species’ survival (Spolsky; Austin, 39). As a result, it is possible to say that cognitive and evolutionary arguments do not necessarily undermine the postmodernist views expressed by the key advocates of the theory, or conveyed by Golding within the confines of his later creations. On the contrary, they can lend credence to most of these claims as well as provide an illuminating lens through which postmodernist productions can be examined.

Golding’s antagonism to the reductionism of science may still fuel arguments against carrying a rational interpretation of texts that were not meant to be read rationally. However, judging by Golding’s attack on critics in *The Paper Men* as well as his confession that he had had never read a criticism of his work that adequately addresses the full complexity of books ‘far more complicated than [they] look’ (Golding in Haffenden 105), it might be safe to assume that Golding might have been antagonistic to most critical approaches to his novels for basically the same reason. Such reductionism is, of course, inescapable given what Nordlund describes as ‘the “unimaginable complexity” of interpretation,’ which he attributes to the infinite possibilities involved in the categories of reader and world combining with the finite category that is text.¹⁵⁸ There is also the fact that the desire to know or understand is an innate tendency that cannot be denied, and that any attempt at ‘producing real knowledge’ is likely to result in seeking a much deeper level of analysis, or in searching for the ‘underlying regularities’ lurking beneath the intricate exterior of art or any phenomenon for that matter (Carroll, *Reading* 29). As a result, it might be plausible to deem reductionism as almost inevitable or unavoidable, but not necessarily falsifying or limiting, especially if there is a

¹⁵⁸ According to Nordlund, the relationship between these three elements is governed by three different theories: a theory of reading between text and reader, a theory of context between text and world, and a theory of reality between world and reader. If a critical endeavor jeopardizes this complexity and addresses only one theory or relation, it will be reductive, and so far, most literary approaches are classified as such.

willingness to admit that there is more than one way of examining an argument, and that each possesses the advantage of highlighting a particular angle. It might even be possible to argue, given Golding's views on the complexity of art as a reflection of the complexity of the artist himself, that providing a rational interpretation is but one of the many perspectives that help shed light on the divide between the rational and the religious in Golding and that contribute, as such, to reinforcing his later interest in the simultaneous validity of multiple readings, more so perhaps than the reductivity of a single interpretation.

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